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THE GOOD MAN

by

D.H. LAWRENCE

There is something depressing about French eighteenth-century literature, especially that of the latter half of the century. All those sprightly memoirs and risky stories and sentimental effusions constitute, perhaps, the dreariest body of literature we know, once we do know it. The French are essentially critics of life, rather than creators of life. And when the life itself runs rather thin, as it did in the eighteenth century, and the criticism rattles all the faster, it just leaves one feeling wretched.

England during the eighteenth century was far more alive. The sentimentalism of Sterne laughs at itself, is full of teasing self-mockery. But French sentimentalism of the same period is wholesale and like stale fish. It is difficult, even if one rises on one's hind-legs and feels "superior," like a high-brow in an East End music-hall, to be amused by Restif de la Bretonne. One just sits in amazement that these clever French can be such stale fish of sentimentalism and prurience.

The Duc de Lauzun belongs to what one might call the fag-end period. He was born in 1747, and was

twenty-seven years old when Louis XV died. Belonging to the high nobility, and to a family prominent at court, he escapes the crass sentimentalism of the "humbler" writers, but he also escapes what bit of genuine new feeling they had. He is far more manly than a Jean Jacques, but he is still less of a man in himself.

French eighteenth-century literature is so puzzling to the *emotions*, that one has to try to locate some spot of firm feeling inside oneself, from which one can survey the morass. And since the essential problem of the eighteenth century was the problem of *morality*, since the new homunculus produced in that period was the *homme de bien*, the "good man," who, of course, included the "man of feeling," we have to go inside ourselves and discover what we really feel about the "goodness," or morality, of the eighteenth century.

Because there is no doubt about it, the "good man" of today was produced in the chemical retorts of the brain and emotional centres of people like Rousseau and Diderot. It took him, this "good man," a hundred years to grow to his full stature. Now, after a century and a half, we have him in his dotage, and find he was a robot.

And there is no doubt about it, it was the writhing of this new little "good man," the new *homme de bien*, in the human consciousness, which was the essential cause of the French revolution. The new little homunculus was soon ready to come out of the womb of consciousness on to the stage of life. Once on the stage, he soon grew up, and soon grew into a kind of Woodrow

Wilson dotage. But be that as it may, it was the kicking of this new little monster, to get out of the womb of time, which caused the collapse of the old show.

The new little monster, the new "good man," was perfectly reasonable and perfectly irreligious. Religion knows the great passions. The *homme de bien*, the good man, performs the robot trick of isolating himself from the great passions. For the passion of life he substitutes the reasonable social virtues. You must be honest in your material dealings, you must be kind to the poor, and you must have "feelings" for your fellow-man and for nature. Nature with a capital. There is nothing to *worship*. Such a thing as worship is nonsense. But you may get a "feeling" out of anything.

In order to get nice "feelings" out of things, you must of course be quite "free," you mustn't be interfered with. And to be "free," you must incur the enmity of no man, you must be "good." And when everybody is "good" and "free," then we shall all have nice feelings about everything.

This is the gist of the idea of the "good man," chemically evolved by emotional alchemists such as Rousseau. Like every other homunculus, this little "good man" soon grows into a slight deformity, then into a monster, then into a grinning vast idiot. This monster produced our great industrial civilization, and the huge thing, gone idiot, is now grinning at us and showing its teeth.

We are all, really, pretty "good." We are all extraordinarily "free." What other freedom can we im-

gine, than what we've got? So then, we ought all to have amazingly nice feelings about everything.

The last phase of the bluff is to pretend that we *do* all have nice feelings about everything, if we are nice people. It is the last grin of the huge grinning sentimentalism which the Rousseau-ists invented. But really, it's getting harder and harder to keep up the grin.

As a matter of fact, far from having nice feelings about everything, we have nice feelings about practically nothing. We get less and less our share of nice feelings. More and more we get horrid feelings, which we have to suppress hard. Or, if we don't admit it, then we must admit that we get less and less feelings of any sort. Our capacity for feeling anything is going numb, more and more numb, till we feel we shall soon reach zero, and pure insanity.

This is the horrid end of the "good man" homunculus.

Now the "good man" is all right as far as he goes. One must be honest in one's dealings, and one does feel kindly towards the poor man --- unless he's one of the objectionable sort. If I turn myself into a swindler, and am a brute to every beggar, I shall only be a "not good man" instead of a "good man." It's just the same species, really. Immorality is no new ground. There's nothing original in it. Whoever invents morality invents, tacitly, immorality. And the immoral, unconventional people are only the frayed skirt-tails of the conventional people.

The trouble about the "good man" is that he's

only one-hundredth part of a man. The eighteenth century, like a vile Shylock, carved a pound of flesh from the human psyche, conjured with it like a cunning alchemist, set it smirking, called it a "good man" --- and lo! we all began to reduce ourselves to this little monstrosity. What's the matter with us, is that we are bound up like a China-girl's foot, that has got to cease developing and turn into a "lily." We are absolutely bound up tight in the bandages of a few ideas, and tight shoes are nothing to it.

When Oscar Wilde said that it was nonsense to assert that art imitates nature, because nature always imitates art, this was absolutely true of human nature. The thing called "spontaneous human nature" does not exist, and never did. Human nature is always made to some pattern or other. The wild Australian aborigines are absolutely bound up tight, tighter than a China-girl's foot, in their few savage conventions. They are bound up tighter than we are. But the length of the ideal bondage doesn't matter. Once you begin to feel it pressing, it'll press tighter and tighter, till either you burst it, or collapse inside it, or go deranged. And the conventional and ideal and emotional bandage presses as tight upon the free American girl as the equivalent bandage presses upon the Australian black girl in her tribe. An elephant bandaged up tight, so that he can only move his eyes, is no better off than a bandaged-up mouse. Perhaps worse off. The mouse has more chance to nibble a way out.

And this we must finally recognize. No man has

"feelings of his own." The feelings of all men in the civilized world today are practically all alike. Men *can* only feel the feelings they know how to feel. The feelings they don't know how to feel, they don't feel. This is true of all men, and all women, and all children.

It is true, children do have lots of unrecognized feelings. But an unrecognized feeling, if it forces itself into any recognition, is only recognized as "nervousness" or "irritability." There are certain feelings we recognize, but as we grow up, every single disturbance in the psyche, or in the soul, is transmitted into one of the recognized feeling-patterns, or else left in that margin called "nervousness."

This is our true bondage. This is the agony of our human existence, that we can only feel things in conventional feeling-patterns. Because when these feeling-patterns become inadequate, when they will no longer body forth the workings of the yeasty soul, then we are in torture. It is like a deaf-mute trying to speak. Something is inadequate in the expression-apparatus, and we hear strange howlings. So are we now howling inarticulate, because what is yeastily working in us has no voice and no language. We are like deaf-mutes, or like the China-girl's foot.

Now the eighteenth century did let out a little extra length of bandage for the bound-up feet. But oh! it was a short length! We soon grew up to its capacity, and the pressure again became intolerable, horrible, unbearable: as it is today.

We compare England today with France of 1780.

We sort of half expect revolutions of the same sort. But we have little grounds for the comparison and the expectation. It is true our feelings are going dead, we have to work hard to get any feeling out of ourselves: which is true of the Louis XV and more so of the Louis XVI people like the Duc de Lauzun. But at the same time, we know quite well that if all our heads were chopped off, and the working-classes were left to themselves, with a clear field, nothing would have happened, really. Bolshevist Russia, one feels, and feels with bitter regret, is nothing new on the face of the earth. It is only a sort of America. And no matter how many revolutions take place, all we can hope for is different sorts of America. And since America is *chose connue*, since America is known to us, in our imaginative souls, with dreary finality, what's the odds? America has no new feelings: less even than England: only disruption of old feelings. America is bandaged more tightly even than Europe in the bandages of old ideas and ideals. Her feelings are even more fixed to pattern: or merely devolutionary. Her art forms are even more lifeless.

So what's the point in a revolution? Where's the homunculus? Where is the new baby of a new conception of life? Who feels him kicking in the womb of time?

Nobody! Nobody! Not even the Socialists and Bolshevists themselves. Not the Buddhists, nor the Christian Scientists, nor the scientists, nor the Christians. Nobody! So far, there is no new baby. And therefore, there is no revolution. Because a revolution is really

the birth of a new baby, a new idea, a new feeling , a new way of feeling, a new feeling-pattern. It is the birth of a new man. "For I will put a new song into your mouth."

There is no new song. There is no new man. There is no new baby.

And therefore, I repeat, there is no revolution.

You who want a revolution, beget and conceive the new baby in your bodies: and not a homunculus robot like Rousseau's.

But you who are afraid of a revolution, realize that there will be no revolution, just as there will be no pangs of parturition if there is no baby to be born.

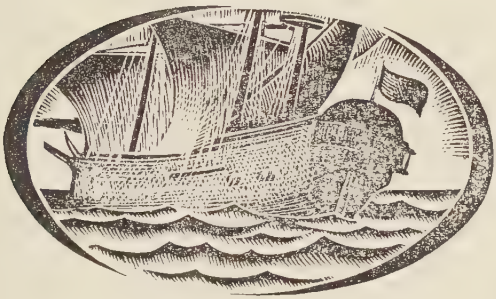
Instead, however, you may get that which is not revolution. You may, and you will, get a *debacle*. *Apres moi le deluge* was premature. The French Revolution was only a bit of a brief inundation. The real deluge lies just ahead of us.

There is no choice about it. You can't keep the *status quo*, because the homunculus robot, the "good man," is dead. We killed him rather hastily and with hideous brutality, in the great war that was to save democracy. He is dead, and you can't keep him from decaying. You can't keep him from decomposition. You cannot.

Neither can you expect a revolution, because there is no new baby in the womb of our society. Russia is a collapse, not a revolution.

All that remains, since it's Louis XV's Deluge which is louring, rather belated: all that remains is to

be a Noah, and build an ark. An ark, an ark, my kingdom for an ark! An ark of the covenant, into which also the animals shall go in two by two, for there's one more river to cross!



A NOTE ON BIOGRAPHY

by

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

In the last five hundred years we have developed a curiously literary conception of what constitutes a man's life. It is natural that this should be so. Man's life is a mystery, and I do not mean that in the vaguely cosmic sense that we know not whence man hath come nor whither he goeth. I mean that the actual composition of any individual life, here and now, in this world, is a mystery. The principle of its continuity is mysterious. Its discontinuity and lack of principle are no less so. And that both continuity and discontinuity, principle and lack of principle, coherence and incoherence, should always display themselves together in the process of a man's life is perhaps the greatest mystery of all. It is certainly a mystery that no philosopher will face. It is all or none in these matters, invariably. Either a man's life is continuous and coherent, obedient to a single principle throughout, originating in a known source and proceeding to a known destination. Or it is accidental and chaotic, and any apparent principle is no less so. Those are the two songs that philosophy sings. Theology sings the former, and the practical

mind inclines to accept it. It is the natural tendency of poetry alone to sing the fragmentary song. The mind functions in categories and would like to believe them real. And the literary kind we have agreed to call biography is a splendid implement of this natural wish. It is not second even to psychology with its defined general terms.

What is biography? We know what a dictionary would tell us. We also know that biography has become the second best-selling literary kind in our own time. In a time, that is to say, when life as a whole seems more than ever discontinuous, incoherent and unprincipled. A writer may, if he wishes, live in considerable luxury on the proceeds of one romantic biography every five years. We know these things. But what is biography? It is a question that has not yet had any answer.

And in fact there is no answer until we can answer the other question: What is a man's life? It is possible only to understand the incidentals. It is possible to examine the process by which biography is produced and marketed. It is possible to suggest that the popularity of biography is the popularity of a lie, the popularity of a comfortable illusion. And it is possible to understand why this is so. The writing and reading of biography give the mind an agreeable sense of coming to grips with reality and with the supreme reality of individual human life. In actual fact, nothing could be more remote from the reality of a man's life than any version of it which could be written down. The

very process of writing gives form to things which had no form and substitutes an intellectual form for a form which once had reality. (Every piece of writing is a dramatization.) It is in the nature of verbo-conceptual thought to be so. Even a chemical equation is a dramatization of the complicated mutual impact of substances. The equation is a brief synopsis. Certain common elements are abstracted and given balance and opposition. What is omitted, all that does not fit into the terms selected, is, if not the whole, at any rate the major part of reality. And this is true not only of shabby thought and cheap writing. It is only a little less true of the best of both. Only lyrical poetry ever preserves the reality of what it touches because it comes from a more spontaneous source and claims no more than a momentary validity.

To simplify is to falsify. To embrace with a formula is to strangle. A country is not its map. And every man's written life is a literary fiction.

How, then, can we present the reality of a man's life? I fancy there is no way. The whole of a man resides in a single hair of his head, yet in each hair differently. The reality of a man's life inheres in each of the thirty-odd million seconds of every year of his life, in the tedious days as wholly as the days of illumination, in no second less than another. We know many things about a man. We know that he is, in some sense, a bundle of appetites or propensities. He needs to eat, sleep, make love, investigate, submit, dominate, build and destroy. If he is frustrated in the gratification of

any of these appetites or propensities his mind or his body becomes sick. And we have some idea, drawn largely from subjective experience, in what ways the experience of others enters into them. We can forecast often how a man of whom we know a little will behave in a given situation. And yet he remains mysterious. Even the personality which we know is something that is real only for us. It is a personality which is partly created and defined by our presence. In other company it is different. He is, as we say, a different man. He exists in a state of flux. He is a flow of existence. He is vibrancy. The personality which is continuous is also diffuse. It is hardly a personality at all. In solitude a man is diffuse. He takes form in relation only to an external situation. His friends and enemies define him. In a quite real sense, they create him. Only the poet and the artist, the mystic, have any personality in solitude. And that is because they are capable of defining themselves in relation to an imaginary world first defined by themselves. And that is only partial. Other men are given momentary form by external circumstances. They become to some extent coherent. Impulses form together in a single or at least a perseverant will. They arrive at a general purpose. Their lives grow more rather than less continuous, in obedience to a more or less single principle. But the general body of their behaviour and experience remains diffuse. They have no God. They survive from day to day. If they are uprooted from habitual circumstances, thrown out of work or separated from their wives, they

'go to pieces'. And even their mothers and wives know very little about them. Even the picture we draw of our most intimate companions is far too definite and far too literary. They are all implements rather than agents. They have no God, and yet they are used.

It is less true of great men than of little ones. That is what constitutes their greatness. A form is given to their behaviour and experience at an earlier age. It persists. They have a single will. They cohere. Their lives are less at the mercy of laziness, fear and cheap love. There is less waste, less diffusion. They exist in solitude. A principle of economy is operative in them. They have a God. If they are used, they know it. They are consciously used. They have, with Spinoza, seen Freedom in the Consciousness of Necessity. And in consequence they offer less resistance. They select their own data for consideration. Opportunity is visible. Yet it is still only partial.

That which is worked into the pattern chosen to be accomplished is only a fraction of the total experience of even the greatest of men. Their spontaneity is compromised. Violence and coercion exist at the heart of their every day. Their desires and their acts diverge. Something happens continually in the deeper sources of which they have no cognizance. What dreams troubled the sleep of Jesus of Nazareth? They run to waste in even the best moments. And yet we write their lives. Their own self-knowledge was imperfect. They were fragile and evanescent forms in a great chaos. They were glow-worms lying out on the great marshes. And

yet, knowing only the smallest fraction of what they themselves knew, we select and give dramatic or epical form to their lives and assimilate them into the archives of literary fiction. They enter into the realms of biography which is no more than a vast racial mythology. The spurious essence is distilled in words. A myth survives. They vanish. And the myth which survives is that which is useful to those who make and listen to it. We take hints from the little that we do know and develop these into a pattern which is pleasant to contemplate because it flatters some aesthetic or moralistic illusion and gives a new apparent simplicity to the life which we know in ourselves to be complicated to the point of incomprehensibility. Life seems less unsafe. And that illusion of safety is necessary because men do not possess the courage of their own chaos.

It is for this reason that the conventions exist. The life of a man, for literary purposes, has its own special rules, canons and keepings. It has a specific kind of verisimilitude to preserve. The intrusion of a foreign element, a false note, is intolerable.

The only man I ever tried to write a life of was St. Paul. And I got no further than the beginning of a third chapter. I started with the description of St. Paul's physical appearance in *The Acts of Paul and Thekla* and presented him as an epitome of 'the little man' --- Napoleon and Charlot --- possessed of infinite

will to power by reason of his limitations and a natural resentment against them. From that I began to grope for a pattern in the life of St. Paul. The determined form of natural limitations. The movement towards self-transcendence. The radiance shining out of that final pattern which comprehends the whole. But how to uncover it? There seemed to be no way, and I finally came to the conclusion that I was not writing about St. Paul at all but about another 'little man' with whom I was deeply involved at the time. It necessitated a pure act of faith to suppose that any such transcendent radiance was or ever had been real. Why should I suppose it more easily of St. Paul than of Mme. Blavatsky or Father Divine or any other religious bully of uncommon vitality? Might not Saul of Tarsus have remained essentially the clenched little egoist throughout, having the significance he had, in his own time and the whole Christian era, because of nothing but historical accident? Or perhaps I had even got the physical, astrological type wrong. There is no way of knowing it for certain. The world in which the Christian Church took root was a world we cannot see or experience. We have records, written down, but is there any word in the dictionary whose meaning is not completely transformed in a hundered years? There is hardly one crucial word in *The New Testament* to which scholars cannot give a score of meanings, some of them directly opposite. This passage, for instance, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter V:

It is reported commonly *that there is* fornica-

> tion among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from you.

I have seen a book in which a Greek scholar translated it, in a quite opposite significance, to mean:

> As a whole, progress is reported amongst you --- and it is progress of a kind which is assuredly not made known amongst the nations --- to such an extent that a Soul-Newly-Wedded-to-the-Way is receiving certain things from the Father. And you yourselves are people who have been inspired of the Spirit: and not more did you travail to that end than you have done in order that the comrade who has achieved this result of his labor may be raised above Earth from out your midst.

The degree to which the language of St. Paul must be considered symbolic is as uncertain as that. There is no way of knowing. There is no means of clearing away the mental, organic and spiritual accretion of two thousand years. A special science of Biblical Criticism has arisen in the effort to do so. It has established many useful intellectual positions, mainly negative. But we cannot unlive two thousand years of new experience. We cannot unread all the thousands of books which have moulded and remoulded our language and our attitudes to the world of things and ideas. An event in time is never real to the men living at another time. It may be partially real. Situations and constellations

of experience repeat themselves in part. History has a way of clearing in patches. The revolutionary will darkly understand revolutions. The man of a declining age will understand decadence in a dark and uncertain way. One is sometimes nearer to Dionysos than Christ. But it is very dark. The effort to see a past thing in bright imaginative light is painful. The mind faints. The belly sinks and turns sick with the effort. It is all dark. Certainly there are moments of vision. A stone image dug out of the ground, a fragment of previously unrecorded legend ... A catalyst of the mind seems to run together and fuse experience of thousands of years ago with that of today. But what is left when the moment is over is all of it in terms of our own reality. Nor is it an intellectual means that we have used. It is a vague sense of life that operates in trance-like and hypnagogic moments.

We begin to understand a man of the past by dining with a friend. We know nothing of Helen or Cleopatra except as we find it in our own wives and mistresses. Our best means of coming closer to the subject in hand is to talk of quite other things. All in all, we learn what is real only in becoming ourselves more real.

St. Paul is unreal to me. Most of the time he is completely unreal. There are moments of illumination in which I can see and feel him. It is dream-like reminiscence. St. Paul is a man with an audible voice. His presence is vaguely disturbing. But for the most part I know him only as a solvent of historical forces

which are still operative in our own day. He is the theologian of a Visible Church which is still visible. He is intellectually present at every altar. It is often a faintly disagreeable presence. He speaks in *The Church Times* with Bishop Blunt on one side of him and General Franco on the other like the comical and tragic muses. Children know him in Sunday Schools to which they have been forcibly dispatched by parents who want one day to themselves. Kittenish girls and pimpled young men are aware of him at the meetings of their Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society. He smells of damp and musty libraries as well as of incense. He glares in a painting by Albrecht Durer. Never, by any chance, does he exist outside one's own experience. And it is only in terms of his own experience that a writer could honestly set himself out to study the man in a book, which is precisely what no writer has ever done and what no public would ever allow a writer to do. It was easy enough for Renan. In his complacent nineteenth-century way, with all the new plutocratic rationalism about him, Renan knew the limits of human experience. What did not exist for Ernest Renan did not exist. Applied science was in the ascendant. Industry prospered. The mind could look upon *Les Origines du christianisme* from a higher level. Charles Darwin had demonstrated the ascent of mind from the jelly-fish to Ernest Renan, and St. Paul was only a step in the path towards that consummation. The experience of St. Paul was the experience of Ernest Renan *minus* the greater knowledge of men and matters which

two thousand years of progress had given to Ernest Renan. It is impossible for a man of today to go through those contortions. He will see it as a possibility that St. Paul's experience was of a higher order than his own or different in kind. He does not necessarily believe in progress. It is conceivable to him that the mind should have suffered a regression. He knows simply that the experience of St. Paul and of St. Paul's moment of time was different from his own. And he will not automatically assume that life has been engaged since that moment in rising on stepping stones of its dead selves to higher things.

One thing is certain. If there has been, since the time of St. Paul, a regression in human consciousness, then St. Paul is partly responsible for the fact. He was a main implement of the historical forces which, beginning to operate in his world, have culminated in our own. And it would be difficult, if we believed in a regression, to have pity on his memory. It would be more than human to resist any temptation to piss on his ashes. We should have to regard ourselves as his last victims, as St. Stephen was his first. The Jews in Germany, our own two million unemployed, the anarchists and communists in Spain and many young souls mortified in their adherence to the dead letter of a creed would have to be regarded as his last victims. And it would then be very difficult to write a biography according to the laws and conventions. It would be difficult to write calmly at all.

BIG FIDDLE*

by

KAY BOYLE

VII

On the third day the sun came out and coming back from the beach he crossed the square and saw the Italian of the steamer. This time he was dressed in a rust-colored shirt with a yellow scarf knotted around his throat and he was sitting at a café table in the sunlight, just outside the awning's shade, and another man sat with him. When the Italian saw the thin young American crossing, lost and then found again in the noon-day crowds, lost and then found because so much taller than the others, he got up at once and went quickly through the people in pursuit. Big Fiddle sensed him coming, but he did not stop, did not turn to see, and when he felt him just at his elbow and about to speak, the color of pleasure poured up into his face. By Jesus, seeking me out, coming right after me, he thought, and still he did not cease walking but ducked his head in terrible and wondrous anticipation. He wants to know me, wants to get acquainted, a classy-looking bird like that. Only when the Italian

* The first portion of this novelette appeared in previous issues.

touched his elbow behind did he stop going, starting and turning as if amazed, and flushing in desperately and painfully feigned surprise.

"Didn't we meet on the boat coming from Naples?" the Italian said. He looked older in the brilliant hot mid-day sun, but the presence, the command, the mastery were there.

"Yeah, sure, coming over from Sorento," Big Fiddle said. He stood, savagely trying to keep his mouth from grinning, looking blind into the light. "I didn't know you'd remember," he said.

"Of course!" said the Italian, and Big Fiddle felt his arm being taken, saw the Italian's plump, well-turned and well-manicured hand run in under the elbow of his arm which held the book, the bath-robe, the dripping bathing-suit, and the Paris edition of the New York Herald-Tribune. "Of course, I remember. You got the steamer at Sorento when we stopped there." Something had altered in him since they talked on the boat, something was marvellously different, and now he turned him gently, urbanely towards the terrace of of the little café. "My friend's an Englishman," he went on saying. "I think you'll enjoy meeting him. He got here on the morning boat. We've reserved our places for the cinema tonight." The Italian's arm through his guided him across the square, through the standing and sauntering people towards the Englishman, the table, the two big glasses of the ruby-colored drink. "Have you been to the film of the Duce's visit to Berlin?" he asked, perhaps forgetting that he had

said it on the steamer coming out. "I saw it in Rome at the beginning of the week and I'm going again this evening. Wonderful reception the Duce was given in Berlin, wonderful record of the whole German nation's enthusiasm --- "

"What do you know about that?" said Big Fiddle, going in passive confusion where he was led. The Italian made a gesture with his free arm and smiled, seemingly from the great pleasure he was deriving from meeting the American again.

"Oh, yes, a wonderful document," he said. "A wonderful sight. All the houses hung with bunting and and flags, yes, great big banners out of all the windows and bunting, yes, bunting." He said the word over several times as if very pleased that he had managed to recall it from the depths of memory. "Everyone cheering, women crying and kissing the ground, everyone kissing the flowers before they threw them to the Duce and the Führer. Wonderful thing to see."

They had come to the table now and the Italian halted him before it: the seated Englishman had a hat on, a brown new-looking felt, and he wore a tan wool jacket and a necktie knotted in his collar, perhaps the one necktie, the one collar being worn at that instant on the island. His eyebrows were sandy and wild, and the nose short as an Irishman's in the heavy, sallow, close-shaven face. Big Fiddle saw the teeth were bad: three of them gold across the top to the left side, and the rest of them mis-shapen and stained, perhaps from nicotine or a pipe's stem, or merely from

his own or his ancestors' negligence. A proffessional something, Big Fiddle thought, looking into the cold, light, glassy eye; a card-shark or poker-bum or a traveller for a cheap line of goods, maybe selling suspenders; or maybe a prize-fighter, even, because of the carelessly and brutally carried might and brawn in the shoulders, and the fist lying on the table, and the jaw. Not liking him, Big Fiddle shook hands with him and sat down, balancing the book, the newspaper, the bath-robe uncomfortably on his knees, thinking uneasily: He ought to use Listerine, that's all I know about him.

There they sat, the three of them, with apparently nothing in common but these stabs made at a common language: the Italian's the undaunted social attempt to make it plausible, the American's efforts half-shaken with laughs out of the confusion of why they wanted him sitting there, while the Englishman, looking into his drink or out across the square, slowly, passively, and mercilessly tortured his mother-tongue. In a minute, and without seeming to turn in that direction, he put his hand out, the wide, sand-colored, almost inhuman object with the veins on it showing thick and insensate as rubber-tubing underneath the hairs and skin, and casually but unequivocally picked up the book from the American's knee.

"Going in for a spot of detective fiction, what?" he said. Holding it, he ran the pages through, the broad finger-nails, the yellowish-stained thumb lying square on the edges of the continental paper-bound book.

"Well, yes, I do now and then," Big Fiddle said. He looked, half-smiling, at the two faces at the table, and then down into the drink the Italian had ordered for him. "I guess we're all of us guilty of reading things like that once in a while." He took a gulp of the red drink, and because no one had said anything, he said: "The thing is I don't always sleep well at night, so the doctor I saw up in London, he said to stop taking the pills they'd given me back home. He said they might be habit-forming or something like that, so I tried trimming down on them." He gave a jerk of uneasy laughter, clutching the bathrobe and the newspaper and the wet bathing-suit with a tensity seemingly out of all proportion to the place, the company, or even the nerves' quivering ravishment. "So this medical guy up in London, he said I ought to try reading detective stories. Only I can't get into them. I don't get the right slant on them. I don't know what it is."

The Englishman had put the book down on the table, and with two thick fingers twisting the glass-stem he stared out across the people and the sunlight in the square. Big Fiddle took another quick swallow of his drink and then looked at the two faces again: first at the side of the Englishman's face and then at the Italian's, as if making of them some desperate and hopeless request: perhaps asking them for something as unaccordable as comprehension or ease.

"There's just a chance that you don't approach these detective stories in the right way," the Englishman said. There was a slow, stubborn dreaminess in

his voice, different from what the hands and the face said the voice might be. "Some people have a hard time believing the criminal's such a bad egg after all. They like to argue that maybe he's been a victim of peculiar circumstances, the dupe of his environment or of his education ---" He sat talking, lazily, reflectively talking and turning his glass's stem as he looked out over the hot flaggings where the Germans in big hats and shorts and summer pajamas wandered. "There is certainly to my knowledge a point of view that sees it like that," he said lingeringly, "and I daresay it has its virtues ---"

"Yeah, I think maybe there's something in it," Big Fiddle said. The Italian was leaning with both arms in the velvet-textured rust-brown sleeves on the café table, his cigarette-lighter in his fingers. He did not lift his eyes but listened, while his fingers turned the cigarette-lighter from vertical to horizontal, from horizontal, quickly, exactly, to vertical again.

"Have some soda in that," the Englishman said when the waiter brought the three fresh glasses of drink. He lifted his own glass towards the siphon and motioned with his chin towards the American's. In the brief instant before Big Fiddle worked his hand free from the encumbrance of bathrobe, newspaper, and bathing-trunks, the Englishman looked evenly and inscrutably into his eyes. Then he put his glass down in its saucer again and went on saying: "Any amount of people feel like that, perfectly sound subjects, citizens. Sympathy with the underdog when law and order get him. By the way," --- the Englishman took a little of

his drink --- "you're from the States, I take it?"

"Yeah, straight from the U.S.A.," Big Fiddle said. He shifted his legs, trying uneasily to smile.

"Came by way of England, I gather?" the Englishman said. He was looking out over the piazza, his eyes partly closed, squinting under his hat's brim at the sun.

"Yeah, I was playing in London, y'see," Big Fiddle said. The Italian beside him still played with his lighter, setting it up, laying it down, and did not lift his eyes. "This doctor I was speaking of a while back, he told me to try Devonshire. So when I'd got through with this orchestra I'd contracted with, I went down there. We had an eight-week contract with a London night-club," he said, and he looked at the two faces at the table in hope; shy because speaking of himself but wanting to tell them so they'd know. "He said I ought to go somewhere and try and be quiet and get a general change. So I put the fiddle in storage in London before going south. Y'see, I'm a musician. I play the bass-viol," he managed to say.

The eyes of the Italian and the Englishman had not met, but now as if in response to a given sign or as if he had been waiting for these words to be spoken, the Italian now flicked his lighter into the pocket of his trousers and began to speak.

"We don't meet many interesting people here in the season," he said to the American. "My friend, Mr. Paine, here, and I, we rather like society. We like meeting people from other countries, and especially

artists, interesting people." He made a gesture with his open hands towards the square where the throngs of foreigners passed and re-passed in the sun. "We have very little to do with most people who come here, but of course when someone interesting turns up --- " His arms were folded over on the table again, the soft broad shoulders lowered in the reddish velvety shirt. The smile he turned to the American scarcely disturbed the clean, smooth, and just perceptibly sagging outline of his face. "You see for yourself what kind of people come here. That's why I took the liberty of speaking to you."

"Trippers' paradise," said the Englishman, looking away at the others.

"Only this time of year," the Italian said, still smiling at Big Fiddle. "If you should visit me in the early spring or in the winter you would see the difference. I live at Capri. I have my villa here," he went on, and he added: "You must come and see me in my villa." Because he must like me all right, Big Fiddle thought, gulping quickly, shyly at his drink; and then he remembered and put his glass miserably aside. Asking a jail-bird, a delinquent home, only you don't know it yet, while the Italian went on saying: "Next time you must come in the spring. It's quite empty then, of course. It is always sunny --- every day we expect the sun and we are not often disappointed. Of course, a little rain at times but that happens everywhere." I like him, thought Big Fiddle; I can't help liking him. "I'll introduce you to the walks we have.

If you like walking, it is a wonderful place to come and walk. You can climb up around the cliffs --- ''

''I walked back from that place they call Anacapri last night,'' Big Fiddle said. Because of the last strong bitter dregs of the drink, or because it was the time of day to eat, his head went suddenly light and spun. ''I did quite a bit of walking around England too.'' He jerked around towards the Englishman to say it. ''Up on the Downs, or down on the Ups, as we say back home.'' He started laughing, but nothing crossed the Englishman's face. ''There was a swell roadhouse in Dorset, right in the middle of the Downs,'' he said, winking quickly, furtively at the Italian's smile. ''I stayed a couple of days there --- place right near Chideoak.''

There was an instant of absolute silence at the table, and then the Englishman turned his face carefully back from the square and looked at Big Fiddle.

''Where did you go after you left Chideoak?'' he said.

It was nothing he could give a name to, not suspicion of anything nor fear, but a breathless, elusive uneasiness, and he went on nervously talking, telling them of going on towards the coast and stopping the night in the hotel there on the sea-front, on the esplanade, sensing as he told it to them the sudden and terrifying failure of even fact's exoneration, the irremediable loss of truth's control. But still he persisted in saying it to them, telling them exactly where he went, how long he stayed; as if anything was better than the

pauses during which they sat at the café table silent, the Englishman assessing him with the prize-fighter's merciless and unhurried eye, the Italian looking down and playing with his lighter again the vertical and horizontal game.

"And then you say you took the bus for Plymouth? What did you think of Plymouth?" said the Englishman.

"Plymouth was alright," said Big Fiddle. He shifted his legs under the table and then he jerked his head away. "The way it was," he said. "The way it happened was, I didn't go straight to Plymouth."

The Italian glanced up and slipped his lighter away in his pocket and not looking at the Englishman for an instant but at Big Fiddle's shaking hand, he said:

"I wonder if you would be free for dinner tonight? Mr. Paine and I would be very pleased if you would join us. At my villa, of course. It would be a relief for you to get away from these ---" He made the gesture again with his open hands towards the piazza.

"Your allies, Count," said the Englishman drily as took his coin-purse out.

"And, of course, your cousins, Mr. Paine," the Italian said.

Strolling or moving deliberately towards food the German ranks were now diminished, returning to their Italian hotel dining-rooms to devour in silent savagery the standard French table d'hote repast. Big Fiddle shook the Englishman's and the Italian's hand in the piazza's swooning heat, stooping and holding his be-

longings against him while the drops from the bathing-trunks dried as quickly as they fell upon the stones. When they had gone he spun without warning into the way of the two bare-footed fisherman who were coming steadily across the square. Their heads were down, away from the weight they carried on their shoulders, their trousers turned up on their slim burned calves, and the few tourists there were left did not look up and see, but self-absorbed (the lovers talking, arm in arm, or the hungry making for home), parted to let them pass and then came together again without seeming to have seen the coffin of black ebony-like wood the fishermen carried by. Only Big Fiddle stood still, staring at it, his tongue parched from the sun or drink and the Count's engraved visiting-card broken double when his hand closed tight on it, while the coffin advanced towards him and passed. The first fisherman called out "Permesso!" and his head hung sideways like a hung man's head. It might have been a crate of oranges they carried instead of this receptacle for death.

VIII

Once in the hotel room after lunch, the thing continued: the grotesquely masked and wigged, the enormous papier-maché figured and floated parade of reminiscence which had perhaps never halted but only digressed a little in its line of march went on; and he the solitary on-looker, the pressing sidewalk crowd of one, watched the gigantic mummers pass: Father O'Malley, frocked, and Mrs. Carrigan with the two white freckled

folds of skin like curtains looped up at her throat, and the girls coming, the first one and the faceless nameless ones that followed, strutting and swinging and titubating singly or in formation down the avenue; until it was the moment for the English girl to come walking carefully and precisely past. He lay on the bed and watched her step fastidiously across the red-tiled Italian floor on which the flies were gathering thick as ants in the filtered pieces of hot light. The mosquito-netting hung from the ceiling and was spread around him, coarse, suffocating, white; the length of the wrong bride's veil, an ancient, simpering, painted bride who had spread it in wanton, Ophelia-cracked provocation around the surly reluctant groom.

Well, what about it? he said, accosting her, blocking the way with the beak of his cap jerked down and a cigarette stub in the side of his mouth. What about it, kid? he said. He almost saw the thin transparent lids drop delicately across her eyes. I see you got home all right, he said, hearing the ugliness in his own voice, the resentment, the jeer that twisted it in his mouth. I see you're sitting up and taking nourishment even if you did spend the evening out with a convict. He almost felt the heel of her shoe catch him viciously in the wrist again. I suppose you stopped a car coming along through the dark out there and told a sob story to some other gink, maybe the line about the Lieutenant-Commander's daughter being a good pure girl and having to hoof it home. Only you never fooled me, not for a minute, he said and he made a gesture as absolute,

impatient, as if he had flung a cigarette stub down in the gutter. I've known too many like you marking time up and down Main Street on a summer evening, he said; hanging around the corner-drugstore or walking by and showing off what you got. I bet that guy who drove you where you wanted to go, I bet you gave him exactly the same thing, the identical bowl of raspberries you handed me. I bet you asked him to put you down on a street-corner so he wouldn't have to see the lousy place you had to go home to, keeping the bluff up, snaking it, flossing it over. You're pretty cute, he said, looking her in the eye, seeing the way the hair strung back behind her ears. You could take care of yourself anywhere, just anywhere, he said as if to quiet the uncertainty that lurked still in his heart.

The one long jalousied window opened like a door onto the stone balcony, and below the balcony lay the hotel's back garden, grassless and flowerless, but jungle-encumbered with plane, fig, orange, and citron trees all pruned of a height so that they roofed the ground beneath impermeably from the sun or rain. Through the mist of soiled white netting he stared in bitterness to and past that other netting of vine leaves and stems, twisted and trained to mount from iron-poled balcony to balcony, that hung beyond in the hot motionless air. The jalousie was partly lowered, hanging sideways on its strings, and under it his sight passed through veil after dim shimmering veil of stuff and light and leaf to the bleak unwatered waste of sky and trembled. He lay on the bed, fully dressed, resentful, fearful, not

listening in drowsiness to the lazy singing of the wasps after the fruit or the humming of the flies along the floor, but harking in cold isolate bewilderment for something else. Only what've you got to kick about, he said. Fine fellas like this Italian swell and this English peer taking to me right from the start, standing me a drink, a couple of drinks, and then asking me home to "dine." Big bugs, not knowing my name even but taking me on because of my S.A. or because of my personality or whatever the fancy name for it is they have over here. Only I'm like a fish out of water in this climate, Father O'Malley, Mrs. Carrigan, he said. There's something about it getting on my nerves. He swung his legs savagely off the bed and kicked the ends of the bride's veil out of his way. He stood looking in the glass a minute, and out of the accumulation of his confusion and fear he said aloud:

"What in Christ's name are they trying to scare me with now?"

He combed his hair back and flung out of the room and down the one carpeted flight of stairs, the legs flipping eagerly, agilely down, the feet slipping quickly, lightly down, as the legs and the feet and the sheer black narrow shoes of an expert tap-dancer might have done; tapping his stuff out step by step to the hall below, out the gravel walk, up the flag-stoned street. Maybe the thing was I oughtn't to have come to an island this way, he thought walking fast; maybe I need a continent to stretch out in, or maybe something bigger, Siberia, Africa. Or maybe I just need to turn

around and go back home.

He didn't take the funicular railway down but went on foot, nervously, quickly going down the wide paved steps between vineyard and orchard walls, making fast for what he called since the first day Big Marina. The Duke of Kent can have her, was what he said; I'll take Little Marina on around the corner on the other side. Here the harbor lay, the water deep and quiet in its bowl. The late afternoon steamer was already filling from the quay with the people, the baggage, the mail-bags that were to go. He walked along the cobbled wharf-side, past the ticket offices, the basket and souvenir-venders, walking hatless in the sun among the Germans carrying their overcoats, their umbrellas hooked on their arms, their bags.

There was music coming across the water from the waiting steamer's deck, the voice that sang on the gramaphone blending with the accompanying instruments in dreaminess and tenderness, so amplified through the loud-speaker that the dream, the tenderness themselves seemed poignantly, almost unbearably magnified. The words the voice sung were German, German accents sounding over the unruffled southern waters, echoing in strangely nordic maturity against the wild island rocks; accents of love and longing, while the instruments, the violins and now and then the notes of a piano, throbbed the deep, yearning, sentimental song. The American moved slowly with the others, listening to this articulation not of adventure or daring or desire, but of a strong, lawful, and

flowery need whose gratification perhaps only distance, certainly nothing as final as death had interrupted. He moved now without aim, perhaps thinking to lose his identity with his direction, freed of the burden of any choice or resolution, lost in this gentle wounded waltz of longing which touched the heart in pleasant misery.

For the first time now he thought with conscious sadness of the English girl, the poor kid who'd never had anything good happen to her and who'd never been anywhere at all. If she hadn't skipped in the dark that night, he might have brought her here with him, bought the right clothes for her, the velvety-looking shirts the women as well wore, the shorts for the childish legs, the big hats tied like a school girl's underneath her chin. A lot of this spaghetti would have set her up, he thought, listening to the man's voice calling deeply, beautifully across the harbor's water for love. What she needed bad was a couple of square meals, and the Chianti --- I bet that would have acted like a tonic on her. She was all right, even if she was pretty thin. She was a pretty good little kid, he said, hearing the violins crying aloud for love. Only the way she looked at it, I wasn't good enough for her. Tonight she'd be going out to dinner with me, and not knowing how or where he was going down the quay, he drifted with the music and the Germans on and on. Once I'd introduced her to the Italian Count and the English Lord, she'd have started singing another tune. Listen, kid, he said, jail isn't anything fatal; you don't peg out with any of its symptoms. I never

heard of it being contagious even. It's something you can get over, and that's what I'm doing now: I'm recuperating from it. I'm on the high road to health, I've begun to rally. I'm going out to dinner with a couple of swells tonight while you're sitting back on your fanny in a drugstore selling choclates or ice-cream cones or working in the Five and Ten and dreaming you're a lady. Shilling and Six-pence, I'll shilling and six-pence you if I ever see you again, he said.

He did not know when the thought began coming to him that while he was down here with his money on him he might get his ticket for the next afternoon and plan to go. I've been three days here, he thought, so I might as well go back tomorrow. I haven't seen Vesuvius or Venice yet, and as long as I'm here I ought to see the landmarks. So that he found himself drifting back through the people again, humming the music they were playing on the gramaphone now, dreamily wandering towards the land and towards the ticket-office. There he heard himself asking for it, speaking English to them loud and clear.

There were two men in the ticket-booth, one seated at the wicket, the other standing, and while the first one made the signs of foreign interrogation --- one ticket, one, with his forefinger lifted to make sure, and Napoli, Sorento? --- the other turned and stooped a little to look and, seeing, spoke the single word. The hand of the seated man had already reached out towards the pigeon-holes in which the variously-colored cardboard oblongs were exactly stacked, and now it halted, stopped

like some mechanical device from action, while he glanced back over his shoulder at the other man. Hearing the word said again, he drew his hand back as if from the touch of fire.

"Tomorrow," Big Fiddle said, loud. "Not for today. Not for this boat. For tomorrow afternoon." He made gestures towards the waiting steamer just beyond and said: "No, no. Tomorrow," and watched the official shake his head. Then the two men spoke rapidly to him in incoherent duet. In a moment he got it: there were too many people. There were no more tickets to be had. "But you're crazy!" Big Fiddle said. His hands seized and clung to the iron bar before him. "You're cuckoo Look at that boat out there, half-full! And you have the nerve to tell me there's no room tomorrow, twenty-four hours ahead of time! You're bats!"

The songs and waltzes of love called from the deck still, but he no longer heard them, the cold of panic and foreboding having seized again upon his heart. He took out his money and put it down before the window, leaning on the metallic edge in something that might have been taken for ease and nonchalance except for his hand's shaking and his mouth's quivering endeavour.

"Listen," he said, speaking his own tongue to them, "I want a ticket to get away from here. Have you got that now? If you're going to be touchy, I don't care if I leave here tomorrow or the next day. I'm in no particular hurry. If there's no room tomorrow, what

about the next day?"

The officials, understanding nothing or feigning not to, looked through the little window at him and shrugged. Then they began again, both talking to him and talking fast. Only one thing was unmistakable and absolute, although they looked with interest at the number of lire he put down: he couldn't have a ticket, they couldn't sell it to him.

"Listen," he said to them, leaning down. "I'm free as the air, and freer. I'm an American citizen, and I've got influential friends right here on this island. I'll make trouble for you, hot and plenty. I'll take it to the authorities." He pulled the money back into the palm of his hand and ran it down into his pocket again. "Where's the other steamship company here?" he said. "I'm on to your game now. You want to try to get me to pay ten times as much as anybody else does, just because I'm a foreigner and don't know what it's all about." The two men in uniform looked at him in wonder as he talked. "Well, you're barking up the wrong tree, that's all," he said. He felt in his coat for the Italian's visiting card, and then he remembered it was in the hotel-room. "I'll leave this island when I feel like it, and don't you forget it," he said.

But there was, it seemed, no other steamship company, and nothing left to do but to catch the next funicular up in restless fury, and in fury fling his clothes off in the hotel-room, ring for a bath and in fury hear them speak to him in German through the

door, and after it dress for the evening in his orchestra's pleated white shirt, and black. He stopped long enough on the square to get a drink to steady him before going on, ordering the same red bitter drink they'd ordered for him that morning, and maybe it was like this, he thought: he'd heard it said that on arriving in these Italian hotels the passport you hand over to them goes straight to the police, and the police cable back to where you came from to find out about you every time. That's the reason taxes are high in places where foreigners come, he thought gulping it down, because they have to take care of all that cabling back and forth, and it's according to what they cable back about you that decides how long the authorities will let you stay. Only there's something wrong with that as alibi because it's not that they don't want me to stay here, they don't want me to go. He could see the information as clearly, as exactly as if written out in that peculiar ticker stripping and typing of telegraphic communications before him, stamped New York and the date of the day before and saying: "Party in question served jail sentence here," or "American passport number blank-blank-blank-blank jailed three years ago for assault on minor advise keep watch on movements," and seeing these words as good as the truth before him he ordered the second drink and drank it in the cooling light, the legs in the black evening trousers crossed and one foot in the narrow pointed patent-leather toe steadily tapping with his pulse's hasty beat.

IX

The villa was built on that steep edge just facing the rocks whose name the American could not remember but which formed an enormous archway in the sea; a pure white flat-roofed house with porches balustraded in white. Cactus and yucca grew thickly along the path that led, swept and tended, to the terrace over the far silent water where the wicker chairs and table with the bottles and glasses and plates of almonds and sandwiches had been prepared. The Count was wearing pearl-grey this time, a grey silk shirt and a grey jacket finely striped with white, and grey silk-seeming trousers that hung long across his insteps and his fisherman's rose-colored sandals. There was such quiet, such absolute calm upon the air, the sea, the house, that Big Fiddle ceased for a moment to believe in confusion or catastrophe.

The first thing the Count said to him was: "Ah, you shouldn't have bothered to dress. We're just ourselves, of course; really quite informal," and Big Fiddle stood tall, angular, awkward in his evening clothes looking in shy and inexpressible happiness at him through the bluish evening air. The Englishman still wore the tan jacket, spotted down the front, and the matching vest and trousers, the small-town office worker's uniform; a real-estate salesman or something about as good, with the continuous commuter's bagging, unpressed knees. There was nothing worth noticing about him, but the Count was something else; seeing him serve the drinks, light the ciggarettes, keep the talk

going, Big Fiddle beheld with reverence the ease of Hollywood, the movie-hero's glamorous restraint and style. Behind him, through the long open windows, he saw the highly-polished tiles on the spacious floor; and here and there zebra skin-mats as thin as paper, and the far shadowy fireplace, empty of fuel or heat, and the dim scarcely-perceivable frescoes on the plaster walls.

Once the double whisky-sodas were done with, the Count rose and led them across the terrace towards the ground-floor room: the sleek head, the padded shoulders of the light grey jacket moving smart as an ad out of "Esquire", against the back-drop of palm fronds and tiny occasional stars. The servant had just lit the branched candles on the table, and the Italian indicated the chair to his right. The Englishman sat down at once and without ceremony on the other side, exactly opposite Big Fiddle's place, and shook the white linen napkin out. The Italian looked from one to the other of them, first to the right and then to the left, and smiled. Then he straighted the gleaming silver beside his plate and pulled the elaborately-cut stemmed glass a little closer.

"Listen," said Big Fiddle, opening his napkin as the others did. "I just wanted to ask you. I was just wondering if you know if they ever make difficulties for people here, for foreigners, I mean."

"Difficulties?" murmured the Italian. He watched the servant bring in the soup and pause with it at the American's elbow.

"No --- no, thanks," Big Fiddle said quickly when he saw it, and the color ran up into his face.

"Here," said the count, easily. "We'll have it here on the table and I'll serve us all. It's more friendly so, I think." He motioned to the servant to put it down. "Here, just like this. That's simpler like that."

The Englishman cleared his throat.

"You were speaking about difficulties," he said looking abruptly across the table at the American. "What do you mean by 'difficulties'?" His face was colorless, the same indescribable sandiness in cheek and lip and hair and eye, but the expression seemed to have altered since morning, to have hardened into an impersonal sardonicism for the young or for this particular category of the young, or into a vindictiveness as personal as dislike. "Have you met with any such difficulties, any unpleasantness during your stay here, may I enquire?"

"Why, no. No," said Big Fiddle in slow, wary defense, not knowing himself why he must deny it so. "Everything's been swell. I can't complain." He glanced at the face across the table from him, the prize-fighter's low, heavy jaw, and for an instant met the eyes' immune inscrutable stare then looked away. "The only thing was, I was thinking about sailing for other climes tomorrow." He said it, half-smiling at the Italian now. "I was thinking about shoving off, but they told me the steamers were all booked up."

"May I offer you some wine?" said the Italian, politely. As he lifted the bottle from its coaster he mur-

mured that there were unusual crowds on the island just now. Nervously, with the ends of his fingers, Big Fiddle pushed his glass across the table's surface towards the bottle, his hand trembling under the soft uncertain light the candles shed.

"Why are you in such a devil of a hurry to leave?" the Englishman said at once, and Big Fiddle glanced quickly, fearfully at him and then back to the glass again. The Englishman sat motionless, expressionless, watching the American boy in his dinner-jacket retrieve the glass of cold white wine and drink, and drinking spill a little in his agitation, and then the voice went on: "If everything's up to scratch and the weather holding the way it is, what's got you going?" The eye did not shift, the hand and wrist on the table did not move aside although the servant passed and took the plates up and laid others down. In helpless confusion and petition, Big Fiddle set his glass back on its circle of lace and looked at the Italian. But the Count was motioning now to the servant to set the plate of cold artichokes before him and to let it be. "This morning you said you might stay a fortnight," the Englishman's voice went on, "and now, all of a shot, you're trying to clear out under twenty-four hours. Look here," he said, suddenly leaning across the table. "You've made one bad mistake so far. You seem to be just about to make another."

"Mistake?" said Big Fiddle. He looked quickly at the Englishman and then down at the artichoke on his plate.

"You seem rather in a hurry yourself, Mr. Paine," the Count said quietly. He was helping out the Englishman's artichoke with the sauce and decorations. "There are two courses to come before the cheese. Of course, I have a weakness myself," he said, demurely spooning the sauce out. "I like women, I like girls very much myself. I'm afraid the English have difficulty understanding that." Big Fiddle looked with interest that altered to admiration as his eyes remained on the Italian's face. "Once I had such a nice little English girl flirt," he was saying. "We had not been introduced, of course. We met each other bathing, down at the Piccolo Marina. But of course she had a chaperone, so I had to begin with the chaperone. She was old, not younger than forty," he said, grimacing. "She wasn't beautiful, but it had to be done." Big Fiddle gulped the rest of his wine down, and looking at the Italian again began to laugh. "I worked very hard at it," the Italian said, whimsically, his mouth almost smiling as he talked to the American, "and, of course, about the end of the summer I had the reward. She came to my villa here, a lovely child about seventeen --- Don't listen, Mr. Paine," he said, his eye cocked playfully at the Englishman. 'Of course, I don't want to shock you," and Big Fiddle flung himself back in his chair laughing aloud. "She was the one who told me that wonderful story about the English," the Count went on. He dipped the end of an artichoke leaf into the sauce. "Why is it the sun never sets on the British Empire?" the Italian said. "Perhaps you have heard

it before?" But Big Fiddle shook his head, grinning, and the Count continued: "Because God can't trust an Englishman in the dark!"

Big Fiddle's head fell back upon his neck and his mouth split wide with laughing; his long thin bones shaking, his throat jerking, his belly and cheeks aching with laughing until the tears came into the corners of his eyes.

"Listen," he said, weak with laughing. "Listen, Count, drunk or sober I want to say I like you. I liked you from the minute I saw you on that lousy little steamer. I liked the way you wore your clothes and the kind of way you walked around. Like when you talk about women it sounds all right." He had tipped back on the two legs of his chair and balanced there, and when he saw his glass was filled again he brought the chair down on its four legs with a bang. "Maybe because you've got what it takes to carry it off," he said, reaching for the wine. "You've got the title, the dough, the carload of class." The Italian was not looking at him now but down at the cigarette-lighter he had begun to play the game with, setting it vertical, then horizontal, then vertical in his fingers again, seeing nothing but its metal taking the candlelight, perhaps hearing nothing but its minute ring as it lightly touched and re-touched the empty plate. "I've got in a hell of a lot of trouble over girls," Big Fiddle said, looking at the Italian with bewitched wild eyes. "But I'm going to watch my step from now on, I'm not going to do anything more the cock-eyed way I've

always done it." He stopped and looked quickly, blindly at the Englishman, and drank. "All that's past history," he said leaning towards the Italian again. "I've wiped the slate clean. I'm going to start over. I want girls, sure, I want 'em. I feel like you do, just the way you put it. I've got a weakness for 'em. Only I can't get the ones I want the way you can get them, because they've got fixed ideas of their own. They don't particularly care for absolutely nothing, and that's about all I've got to offer," he said.

"I don't see that you have anything to complain of," the Englishman said. He sat with his hand and wrist on the table's edge still, looking at the American in callous, almost professional animadversion. "There isn't any record showing that you were particular how you got it."

"Listen," said Big Fiddle, speaking quickly, eagerly to him. "I don't think I get it. I'm drunk or something so I can't make any sense out of what you're trying to say. Listen," he said, the flushed earnest boy's face turning from the Englishman's to the Italian's and swiftly back to the Englishman's again. "I'm playing straight with you. I swear I am. I'll tell you anything you want to know about me. I mean, I can explain it to you, I can tell you how it happened. I was a kid, it was three years back --- "

"We know that one," said the Englishman, not moving. "We're not interested in ancient history tonight."

Big Fiddle reached for the wine glass and lifted it,

shaking, in his hand and drank it down.

"Listen," he said. "I came out of the pen with just exactly nothing. That don't get you very far with the janes. They prefer a guy like this one here," he said, jerking his head towards the Count. "A big shot with a villa in Capri and a collection of shirts that'd give the Duke the gripes with envy. They want class," he said. "If you haven't got class you just get the leftovers. I know it. I found out early that if you haven't got what they're looking for, then there's a tariff. Maybe it isn't the clothes so much as the way you wear them and if you don't carry it off then you can just break down and pay for what you get."

The Englishman sat an instant without moving, and then he dropped his hand from the table into the pocket of his coat.

"I don't suppose you have any objection to telling us exactly how it happened?" he said quietly.

"I'm trying to tell you," Big Fiddle said, swinging his head over his plate in torment. "Can't you see I'm trying to tell you?"

The Count was playing with his lighter, standing it up, turning it over, setting it down.

"My dear fellow, we're listening," he said, not looking up, and Big Fiddle's voice wandered blindly on:

"What do you think I lie awake nights trying to figure out? I keep going over and over it all the time. Sometimes I think I'm going crazy or that I've been crazy ever since it happened to me. I keep on thinking of the letters, kind of half writing them in my head all --- "

"Letters?" said the Italian. His fingers went on turning the lighter over and over and he did not look up when he spoke.

"Yeah, writing to Mrs. Carrigan and Father O'Malley, or maybe just Father O'Malley, so Mrs. Carrigan wouldn't ---

"Stop beating around the bush," said the Englishman abruptly, and Big Fiddle lifted his head in surprise and watched the Irishman-nose, the prize-fighter jaw swelling across the table towards him, expanded by drunkenness or menace to enormity in the candles' fluttering light. "We haven't been hard on you up till now." The Englishman's mouth twisted crooked as he spoke, the underlip sagging sideways, contorted like a Blue's singer to rubber in the spotlight's eye, forming now a ductile container elastic enough to hold the crazy things he had to say. "Just tell us in plain English why you did it."

Big Fiddle put one hand against the side of his face and leaned on it while the room circled slowly and continuously away.

"Listen," he said. "Here's the straight story. I swear to God its true. I was the goat," he said. "That's the part the casting-director always hands me. Somebody else, one of the other boys, got her in trouble first, only I didn't know it. So she just passed the buck to me, she --- "

The Englishman started to speak again, but the Count made a movement with his hand.

"Of course, there is no reason to keep anything from

us, is there?'' he said. He leaned on his folded arms towards the American, the cigarette-lighter motionless by his plate. ''You've come here to dine with friends, haven't you, and this is a sort of little after-dinner chat, the customary moment to tell stories. Isn't that true?'' he said, and Big Fiddle turned his head with difficulty towards him and nodded. ''We're men together, men of the world, and a little chat like this between friends isn't anything, is it?'' the Count went on. ''I can see exactly how it happened, of course. She didn't want to give in to you at first, she resisted, and you were a little bit rougher than you intended. You didn't mean any harm, of course; I can quite see how it came about.'' Big Fiddle sat with one arm braced on the table, the hand supporting the side of his face and head, listening attentively, carefully to him. In a minute, he thought, I'll get it straight; in just another minute everything'll stop swinging and I'll get it. ''Of course, it must have been getting rather dark,'' the Italian went on saying, ''and at first, of course, you did not know quite how hard you had hit her --- ''

The Englishman interrupted with a sound of impatience that came scarcely to articulation in his throat; but the Count raised his hand slightly and gently from the table in request for silence.

''I didn't hit her,'' said Big Fiddle. He manipulated his head in the direction of the Englishman now and with his thickening tongue succeeded in saying: ''She came into the room where I was copying the score out

for the orchestra at the --- ''

''No, no,'' said the Count lightly. He leaned forward and touched the American's arm. ''We're talking about your little English friend,'' he said. ''I think you're mixing the two stories up, the first and the second.'' Big Fiddle looked towards him again and for a moment they looked quietly into each other's eyes. ''You know, the little girl you picked up at Brixton Beach,'' the Italian said, just about to smile. ''The little girl you gave your top-coat to out on the Downs --- ''

''Oh, the Admiral's daughter, was it, or the Lieutenant-Colonel's or whatever you want to call him it's the same by me,'' Big Fiddle said, beginning to laugh. ''Oh, sure,'' he said. ''Sure. I wanted to send her a post-card, only the trouble was I never asked her for her address. I didn't know her name even ---''

''This is enough for my taste,'' said the Englishman, the words spat savagely out as if his revolted feelings had got the best of him at last. ''This horseplay's gone far enough ---''

''She might have difficulty receiving the card now,'' said the Italian, and the Englishman might never have spoken. The Count had begun the game with his lighter again. ''Perhaps you didn't know they'd found her. In spite of the trouble you put yourself to to conceal her afterwards, and even the trouble of disfiguring her ---''

''Found her?'' repeated Big Fiddle, and the room spun slower, slower, until it had almost ceased to revolve on its wheels. The candle-flames blossomed and

swelled, bloomed large and full like monstrous tropic flowers, then shrank, diminished, withered away before his eyes. "You mean, found her --- found her dead?" he said, and drop by drop the blood ran colder through his veins.

"Killed," said the Count casually, turning the lighter in his fingers.

"She put up a good fight, didn't she?" said the Englishman, letting it burst from him at last. "You had to stab her first, and then strangle the rest of the life out of her before you got what you were after, didn't you?" he shouted in outraged decency.

Slowly, carefully, Big Fiddle got to his feet, his eyes fixed on the Englishman, his hand holding tight to the back of the chair. So this is it, this is what they've framed on me this time, he thought. He stood there, swaying for a moment, and then he said:

"You're a cop."

"Yes," said the Englishman. "I suppose that would be a fair enough description."

"Listen," said Big Fiddle, whispering across the table and the candle-light to him. "I didn't do it. Before God, I didn't do it. After she ran out on me I threshed around a couple of hours out there looking for her." He heard his own voice rising, going thinner, faster, higher, like a frightened girl's. "I followed a car's headlights back to Princeton, late it was, after looking everywhere for her like a nut. I didn't know what happened to her, I swear to you I didn't --- "

Out of memory and in terror now he heard the

words take shape in the silence, the voice that spoke them pure, clear, exalted as if Father O'Malley had gone quietly down upon his knees beside him and was repeating: "I commend thee to Almighty God, dearest brother, and commit thee to Him whose creature thou art; that, when thou shalt have paid the debt of humanity by death, thou mayest return to thy Maker, Who formed thee of the dust of the earth. As thy soul goes forth from thy body, may the bright company of angels meet thee; may the judicial Senate of Apostles greet thee; may the triumphant army of white-robed Martyrs come out to welcome thee . . . . Receive, O Lord," prayed the loud clear voice of Father O'Malley in the room, "Thy servant into the place of salvation, of which he hath no hope but in Thy mercy ... "

Big Fiddle stood swaying above the table at which the men still sat, holding to the chair's back for strength, and waiting, now that the voice had ceased praying, for the tears to gush hot, childish, bitter from his eyes.

(the end)

ADRIFT ON THE BIG RIVER

by

ERLING LARSEN

I was so young during those war days that I can not be sure my memory of them is to be trusted. I remember the way the town was with flags in front of all the stores and I remember the soldier that lived at Mrs. Morrow's and stood around downtown all day with his posters but for all I know my memory may tomorrow put a monkey face on him without consulting me or history. Because I was young and impressionable and childhood impressions have a way of slowly coloring to blend with colors of later events. And it is well they do, it seems to me, well there is so fine an agreement, so formal a relation, between the childhood memories of novelists and their later lives and writings. For a novelist needs a childhood to fall back on not for facts so much as for evasions of the present or sidelong comments on things he is in no mood or has no courage to discuss openly and as present truth. And the people who read these childhood memories and say, "How strange a child this novelist must have been, how interesting, how easy it is to see the seeds of his flowered genius in these childhood traits," should

better and more truthfully say, "How strange a man he is to imagine his having ever been such a child, how has not his genius colored even the half-remembered facts of childhood and forced them to have bearing now on what he is or thinks he is or thinks he wants to be."

At least so have things worked out with me and with this story, if story it is, of my own childhood and old Mike Fogarty: the point is not in what happened but in what I remember and in what colors it comes back to me, not that I've an unusually clear memory of Mike, not that he was important then but that I have made him important since.

I have thought of Mike a great deal since the war days and that very fact makes this telling difficult. I can not easily disentangle all the various Mikes I have in my mind, can not label the war-time Mike and separate him from the later Mike, can not say definitely how I as a child then was different from what I am now. It would be easy to make a straight invention of it, to write something sad or something funny about a small boy in a small town during the war. Well, if not easy, then easier than this, for into this there enters Mike, enters something factual or pseudo-factual about myself. Actually I have tried to make just a story of it. I have read in magazines for unpublished writers how you should slant for the slicks or the pulps and I started this story slanted either way, both ways, each of all possible ways, but each time something resembling a fact got in the way and there I was, stuck, stuck

with the problem of changing either Mike and myself or the slant, the memory or the form. I have pages and pages of Mike and me and I could tell the whole story now by clipping paragraphs and pasting them together but I tried that too and still something was missing. Maybe it's my fault, maybe I've muddied my sources by stirring around in them too much. Mabye it's a mistake for a child or anyone to feel his life in someone else, to live in any way but simply and for the moment's exertion, to complicate his own process of reflex or emotion according to any pattern but the inevitable pattern of the moment. Had I done none of those things I could have written a very simple story about Mike and maybe even sold it. I who never sold a story in my life. I who find slanting for the slicks such an impossible problem. I could have started the whole business with a simple paragraph about Mike and let it go at that. But, as you know, I thought too many thoughts about Mike. And, strangest of all, I spoke to him only once in my life.

Old Mike he is now, so called by all in our town that know him or see him pointed out now and then as Old Mike, but when first I saw him he was younger by quite a bit, getting on in years yes but still square in the shoulders and black-haired and young enough for the Ladies' Aid Societies to call him a rascally loafer because he didn't work much. Mother used to call him that. She talked about him the day we moved to town I remember, before I had ever seen him. She had asked Mrs. Morrow next door could she get a man to help us

with uncrating the furniture and moving it around and maybe cleaning up the back yard a little. And Mrs. Morrow had said but the war and everybody busy and all the men with good jobs or in the army so there's only that rascally loafer who won't come you may be sure.

And he didn't come. Up to that time I hadn't even seen him. I'd only heard Mrs. Morrow and mother talk about him but I thought about him as I was near breaking my twelve-year-old back helping mother uncrate and place the furniture and I had a definite feeling about him. I thought he was magnificent. My rebel heart went out to him, a rebel known as rebel and no good to any Ladies' Aid, one capable of saying no when asked to do a job he didn't want to do or wouldn't like. I had a feeling of having heard now of one of the great ones, but I had then and have now no assurance that what I felt had anything to do with anyone but myself. And now, years later, I am sure I had a picture of him walking the hills alone looking down in pity on the town.

That picture came to me, of course, because it was a new town to me. We came there from down in Iowa and it was a new country for me, more rolling than the part of Iowa I knew, with trees on the hills, with smaller fields and much more wheat and many more cows. And the town. In parts of Iowa you drive along the roads watching for water-tanks, seeing them miles away above the towns marking your destination, and even in the towns you feel like in the country and

maybe even see the next town's tank all hazy and far away above the corn growing at the end of the street. Parts of Iowa are flat and green and the towns are like dropped on the plain without sense or plan. But this new place was not like that at all. Here you would come along the road curving through easily rolling hills and at the top of one hill you might see the town far ahead and then a mile farther on see it again maybe, closer now with big trees and little white houses and a river running through it shining among the dark trees, and then the road would come down out of the hills turning so you could see the town from all angles and soon there would be more houses than in the country, like smaller farms with little red barns and many cows black and white, and then easily slowly all ready for it you would come into the town itself and into the wide streets with the trees all along. There may be towns like that in Iowa but I had never seen one and it was very strange to me. It helped give me, or gives me now, that picture of the strange Mike walking the hills alone looking down in pity on the town.

"He must be like papa was," I said moving crates around the house, seeing that hill-picture of Mike.

"Who?" my mother asked.

"That man," I said, "that man wouldn't come to help us here today."

My mother, who had been working along paying small attention to what I, who was one always to ask too many silly questions, was saying, stopped then where she was and turned to me. Her hair had just a little

grey in it that seemed to come and go the way the under-leaf silver comes and goes in the birches when the wind blows. Her hair was damp now and sticking to her forehead. "You must be crazy," she said looking at me.

"How was it papa died?" I asked.

"Your father was always doing what his duty was," she said. "He felt responsibilities to his fellow-men. He wasn't like this man of yours," she said surprising me by calling him mine that way, "never doing an honest day's work."

"Maybe he's busy with more important things," I said remembering my father not going fishing because he had sermon notes to make and telling me about which was more important.

"I declare," my mother said.

"How was it papa died?"

"He went in a blizzard out in the country to see an old lady that was dying and he got sick," she said.

"Was he sorry for her?"

She didn't answer.

"People would say mean things about him if he would have stayed at home."

My mother was tired and hot and she began to cry. Then she came over and kneeled in front of me and put her hands on my shoulders. I could look straight into her eyes. They were shiny wet and began to get bigger and bigger as I looked at them. Then she slapped my cheek, hard, so it burned where each finger had been, and leaned her head on my shoulder and cried very hard.

In one of the first drafts of this story I listed all the Mikes I would have to discuss --- Mike as he is, as he was, as I thought he was, as I think now he must have thought himself, as my mother thought he was, and so on and so on. But right then, with my mother crying and my face crinkling stinging where her fingers had been, there was only one Mike, a Mike to fear and even hate because of my mother's terrible crying.

"Why do people hate people?" I asked then.

"People hate people because they're naughty and don't believe in Jesus."

"I bet he believes in Jesus."

"Who?"

"That man Mike. I bet he does. Maybe that's the important thing why he didn't come to help us. And we hadn't ought to hate him till we find out if he does."

"I didn't mean that," my mother said crying again.

"You said."

"I don't know what I said. If only your poor daddy were here I wouldn't be so mixed up. I don't want you to have anything to do with that Mike. I'm so mixed up."

"I'm mixed up," I said and cried to see her cry, cried for all mixed-up people, for Mike who was hated because people didn't know for sure whether he believed in Jesus.

So in that list of Mikes I made I even brought in Jesus. It was a very complicated business. Something had happened. I had come into remote contact with a

man whose one duty was to himself, at least so I saw him as a child, and as a child I could not have such a contact again. I was growing up and changing. My mother's terrible crying changed me so I never mentioned Mike around her again. So this thing had happened and could not happen again. And as I tried to make a list of Mikes, to discover what made the experience what it was I got only a long series of states of mind. It was as if I were adrift on a big river, floating with it, watching it grow stronger and wilder, feeling it pull me along faster and farther away from the one clear source I knew I should never be able to reach again.

So I now have Mike as source and river and all. I have him now even as an end-product, as a symbol of the human victim of his civilized fellows, as a sacrifice on the altar of civilization, as a dumb burnt-offering that found a voice only after the sacrifice was made and who startled the priests by speaking after his ashes had been sprinkled on the wind. And this last is remarkable, for he spoke to me only and he was not really dead.

He used to come into town every afternoon from his shack out the tracks by the dump. In those war years they built a new siding out there and sheds for handling the flour they were grinding at the new addition to the mill and when they were finished building them they threw a lot of wood and railroad ties and corrugated iron on the dump. Out of this Mike made his shack. He hitched it together with baling wire and

roofed it and sided it with the iron overlapping at the corners so there would be no drafts. He heated it with a stove he made from a fat round oil-drum. There were trees all around where he had built out there, on the bank along the river, between the river and the fill the tracks ran on. It was a sheltered place and cool in summer with the trees and river and the damp earth-smell. And, winter or summer, when Mike came from there to town, he would walk down Water Street and back again. I used to watch him after I knew who he was and he would walk down the street looking in the store windows. Sometimes he would buy tobacco or a little tin of lard, but I remember wondering how he lived, so seldom did I see him buy anything to eat. People got to saying he was too lazy to eat, too lazy for anything but lying on the grass or sitting on a stove to toast his rear. People didn't like him very well.

But there was that shack he had built. He could not have been completely lazy. I used to dream I had a shack exactly like it. And think how wonderful it was to build a place like that from waste. Of course it was the time of Hooverizing and waste was in everybody's talk. And from the waste of wartime building Mike had got his shack. There was a lot of building going on in town those years. There was this addition to the old mill that people had joked about so long saying it would catch fire if you so much as spit on it. Old Anderson built that after he got wartime contracts for flour. And there were the sheds for handling the flour, the new siding, even houses here and there. And

from all of it there was waste, iron, tin, wood, and Mike made his shack from the waste.

The town was all flags then too. Old Glory was outside of every store, red cross flags in all the houses, service flags all over and the great big one, with a star for every town boy gone, hanging across the square downtown. I have these war associations for everything I remember about Mike, the waste and the first shack of his, the flags and my first visit to the shack. It was when one day I saw Mike standing looking up at that big starred service flag that I felt suddenly I wanted to see where he lived. And after that day I went out often, always when I was sure he was not at home. I would go on my way from school and I learned to know the place with the grass mashed to a pulp around the shack and smelling green and fresh, and then with the dust and the sun, and under clouds with the big-dropped rain bubbling on the smooth brown river.

I can even read a war-weariness into myself at that time. And into Mike. I used to feel that his place out along the tracks was the most peaceful place around our town and I would lie in the bushes there listening to the birds whistling and the dry summer leaves rustling in the sunny breeze and lying there I would think of how noisy and busy the town was and once or twice even lie there until Mike came slowly down the track looking tired and old after being in town. It seemed natural that he should be tired from the town, else why go to all the trouble of building his shack out by the river there. I would watch him coming tired down

the tracks and then I would be afraid he might find me and I would run as fast as I could away from him and the shack, keeping the shack between us, until I was far down the tracks and could cross them up the hill toward home. I would lie under the maples across the road from the house and wonder why my mother had said I must never talk to Mike, why he looked so tired that I got tired just by seeing him, tired of my mother and my home.

War-weariness, I am aware from a reading of war novels, is a complete fatigue of spirit, a loss of elasticity that soldiers have after months of blood and pain, a thing not usually believed found in small school-boys in small farming towns. But I am at liberty, nay compelled, to call myself a sensitive child if I am ever to be a great novelist, and there was war in our town then. There was not death and stench but there was hate and much of this hate was for Mike. It would have to be for him, for the great one who held himself above the people of the town, even above the war. I hung around the town as much as around Mike's shack, around the mill and the depot and the theatre and I heard talk of Mike. Mike must have heard it too because one day he came to town to ask for a job. People were astonished. So was I. It made my interest in him even greater, for it was something he had never done before and it changed him entirely in my mind. Unless there were some hidden continuity in this new move. I had to find out.

It happened I was at the mill the day he came and

asked for work. It was the time of harvest and the air was glittering with grain-dust around the mill, golden dusty in the sun, and the ground where the wagons backed up shone with grain spilled in the powdery dust. Mike came up to the foreman and said he wanted a job. The foreman was a grey-haired man with a little American flag clipped into one of his overall hooks.

"You ought to be in uniform," the foreman said.

"I aint."

"He aint," the foreman said about Mike to a farmer there unloading wheat.

"And he aint," Mike said pointing to the farmer who was young and browned by the sun.

"He's feeding the army," the foreman said.

"At a damn good price," Mike said. "I want a job."

And the foreman took him on because it was the time of harvest and they were short of men. And Mike was a good man for them. He worked hard and made good money and he began to drink a little and to talk about getting rich on the blood of the youth of the world, about the harvest of young blood and new wheat, about the grinding of the mill of war and big money. And this made the talk about him even more full of hate. He ought to be fighting, people said, instead of knocking down good wages and drinking them all up and never buying even a war-savings stamp. Mike had always been an outsider and the people hated seeing him get inside. It must have been something like that. The whole town was plastered with flags and the farmers were getting rich and business was good

and there was this new mill and the kids carried peachstones to school and folded gauze and everybody wore buttons with flags on and some lucky ones wore little army insignia that relatives or friends had given them. Business is going great guns, Mike was reported as saying, let's all get rich. He was reported as winking saying great guns.

I wasn't one at the time, being only twelve, to go much to saloons but people said he was drinking. I never saw him drunk. And they said he was talking. I had at that time not heard him talk but that once when he got the job at the mill. But there you are. He was in the air. I had seen a great one in him. He was in my mind. I had a feeling about him that has never left me. I have tried a hundred times to write it down. It is still not written. Mike was something in that town you may be sure. There was a mystery about him, a strangeness that never left him. I remember once I got up courage enough to follow him home. I followed him along the street when he started home from work and watched him walk up the tracks into the sunset to his shack. I clenched my fists till they were sweaty inside and followed up the tracks. When I got to the shack he wasn't there. I had seen him leave the tracks but I didn't see him after that. I waited and I still didn't see him. There was this mystery about all he did. The shack was there and the trees where I had seen him turn off and a robin whistled somewhere but Mike was gone.

There was this mystery even about his drinking.

He was always drunk they said and he was getting rich they said just as he claimed he wanted to. Well all right. People were doing it. But on the blood of the youth of the world. It annoyed people to hear him say that. He got into a fight over that once but only once. He was pretty strong. But getting drunk and rich. Rich on on a small scale. It doesn't work that way. You can be drunk and spend money like water and get rich on a large scale sure. But not on a small one. It doesn't work that way. It was mysterious.

Mysterious too my feelings. I had never talked to Mike but he was a living sacrifice smelling good in the nose thrills of the Lord. He was doing something. He was anyway talking so people talked about what he said. I have told that I was very young. There's a lot in that. It's important. I was young in the lyrical sense not in the educational. Educationally young is being thrilled by flags waving and bringing peach-stones to put in the basket by teacher's desk and putting out the flag each morning in the hole in the sidewalk before your gents' furnishing store that has the big chart of rank insignia in the window. One bar gold second lieutenant. One silver first. Two silver captain. One leaf major. Lyrically young --- make your own terms, it's your story, or is it Mike's or is it the world's and when did it all happen and when will it happen again? --- is falling for a mystery like Mike and liking trees with the sun in them and going outside to be sick when mother and the preacher talk about how young Swenson got half his face smeared off when his rifle blew back

at him and how he looked when he ate, so they put a silver plate where his jaw was. Lyrically young even now I suppose is not remembering how time goes or what times you are talking about so you can't say this is Mike and this is me and he felt so and I did so, is mixing people up, is reading things into people, is making great ones as you like. As I did with Mike when he went to war.

But before he went he began buying materials for building. Each night he would carry a few planks or a roll of tarpaper up the tracks with him and it went all over town he was going to build a new shack of clean wood as a monument to the riches he would make in stocks he would buy now with what he saved from his big wages. A monument to the riches. Not to the blood. He said the blood would have its own. The riches wouldn't. He wanted one decent monument to the riches, a shack built of clean new materials, mostly of wood. It went all over town that way. Or maybe I felt it that way. Or maybe it fits that way now. There is this river trouble again, the trouble about sources. I know there was a lot of money in town then. Women who had always walked downtown to buy cheap meat drove down now in new cars to buy canned chicken and in the stores they would say to one another yes I know of course it's terrible the poor boys we must sacrifice and we do too you should see John eat his grapefruit without sugar. There was money all right. There was the new mill, the new automobiles, new canned foods and I remember there was bacon in new cardboard

boxes with windows in them to see if the meat were lean enough. They drove these new cars fast too. To dances at the lakes. To Portage for shopping. And one of them killed a little boy I didn't know, killed him right by the school so we all saw it and saw blood on the new paint of the dented mudguard. Maybe that was it. I was young enough then to brood over that. Blood on new machinery. Youth's blood on new money. And from that the idea something decent should be done with the money, something clean should be built of new materials and clean wood that smelled of the sun.

All this is lyric youth of course but it's part of the problem of the story. And, factually at any rate, it's a dangerous part of the story because it is so full of this lyric youth. And the next part of it is too, how Mike went to war because of the shack monument he was building. So, to lessen the chance for unbelief on the part of the reader, I shall tell this as factually as possible. The reader must be more than ever on his guard then. In this short section there will be no admissions of uncertainty, of hazy emotionalism. They will be implicit.

Well, Mike owed money on his wood. And he owed it for some time. The shack was not finished yet but Lambert, that's the lumber-yard man, began to worry. Mike had a stack of fresh new wood and an unfinished monument and he owed Lambert thirty dollars. Each night he would carry something out there and add a little to the building and then all of a sudden Lambert

said he could have no more material until he paid what he owed. I was pretty young and the technicalities of a thing like that would have escaped me but I know they hauled Mike off to court and sent him from there to the war. They wanted to attach his wages at the mill or something like that so they took him to court.

Now the judge was a respectable man with a fat belly and a red neck and, as do most respectable people, had a habit of whispering with people. In fact, he whispered his sentences in court and the clerk or some lawyer or someone would have to cup his ear and ask, "What say?" The judge was respectable, he had three sons in the war, and he whispered. The whole town whispered, the judge on the bench leande over and whispered with lumber Lambert, the cop by the door leaned down and whispered with my teacher who sat very stiff on the back row of seats, the people on the street whispered, even my mother and Mrs. Morrow excited across the back-yard fence, whispering. I got to feeling they were whispering about me. When I would pass the grocery and see two women whispering over a big yellow-white cabbage-head I would feel like running. And when I heard they had sent Mike to the war I did run. Up the tracks I ran to sit by a tree and look at the half-finished shack by the river.

And that was how Mike went to war. They didn't take his mill wages because all he had from the day he went to court was soldier's pay. They just sent him off. I don't know how they worked it or if they had any right even to think of working it but away Mike

went. Sent of course, of course herded, but in large part running away too the way I ran from the three yellow-white cabbage-heads whispering. I could read that into Mike very easily. For even after he had gone the whispering went on. The town called the whole thing a good one and Lambert and the judge were more popular and respectable than ever. They knew how to handle guys who talked too much. Yessir, talk too much nowadays and you talk yourself into something Sure. You can imagine the whole town sitting on the bench whispering with lumber Lambert and the judge, all the girls that went around pinning white feathers on boys they thought were slackers, the bandage-rolling Ladies' Aids, the service clubs whispering mottoes in which the word service had a new romantic blood-and-thunder meaning. And when it was all done and Mike gone they thought it was a good one and went on whispering.

They had a thousand whispered stories then about Mike and to every one I could in my mind add one or a picture or an idea I had about him. One of the big ideas I had was of living sacrifice, of Mike as a sacrifice, going to war because youth was dying. He said that once. At least it was around town he had said it. Mother was shocked. Mrs. Morrow told her about it. She said the soldier living at her house had said Mike had said he wasn't young anymore, his youth was dead, all youth was dead, that he would die because there was only death left in the world. That fit in. I didn't know then just how those things worked but I thought maybe

Mike could get away from the war. And I hoped he would until I heard Mrs. Morrow say that. She didn't get it very straight but she said only death left in the world and I got my feeling from that and knew Mike would go through with it. He had lived alone out there among the trees doing things that couldn't be done when the ground vomited rotten heads and pieces of leg and boots filled with a mush of smashed bone and flesh. It was no fun digging when you found those things. It was no good lying on the grass when it was black and sticky with drying blood. I knew he would go. And I thought I knew why he had bought the materials for the new shack and then left them in a pile there among the trees. I thought I knew. And after he had gone the stuff was still there. It wasn't paid for but I thought I knew why Lambert hadn't had it brought back.

He was gone when he was gone all right. I knew when he went. I lay in bed knowing it. I saw it all when the early train whistled. I had a very clear picture of him or of myself getting on the train. I had the picture then and I could make many of them now. Of the town before sunrise after a night of rain with all the sidewalks wet and black and of the train glistening from the storm it had come through up north of town. He was gone all right when he was gone. I felt very bad about it and when mother at breakfast began to talk about it I said she had no business saying anything about a man it was against her law even to talk to. And I went away from the breakfast as she began to

cry and I said, "You like this war it gives you so much to cry about." That was the beginning or the end of the beginning of my finish with my mother. Very dramatic I was and I started for school muttering about forsaking father and mother and cleaving unto me.

Well, Mike's wood lay among the trees up the river for a long time, darkening in the weather, warping a little. Until one day I walked up there and found a lot of kids building on the shack with it. They had torn the old one down and thrown it into the river and were finishing the new one where Mike had started it in a fine roomy place among the trees. They were building it with the new material that was weathered now a little. They swarmed over what they had built, they made a great clattering with hammers and boards, they wrestled two and three at a time with long boards they held waving swaying in the air trying to get them over the roof. Of course it seems a beautifully symbolic thing now but that day I stood watching them a while and then, naturally and as if I had been asked the day before, went over and began to carry boards for them. Pretty soon I was really helping build. I didn't tell them I knew whose place it was or anything like that. Nor did they tell me much. We were all pretty quiet except when we had to say something about nails or boards. We had that small-boy seriousness about what we were doing. It was an important job and allowed no time or energy for idle talk.

So the war went on. We worked slowly on the shack after school and before dark and we used it as a

club-house too but by winter we had finished it and moved Mike's old stove into it. The war from the day we started work was tied up with the shack and then with long winter afternoons spent around the red-hot oil-drum stove and then finally with spring. And Mike came back with summer. A few of us were on the roof patching it where rain leaked through and I saw him coming up the track from town. I can't say how I was sure it was he with the crutches and all but sure I was, as soon as I saw him coming, coming slowly and hunched up with his shoulders stilted up over the crutches and his body swinging heavily like a mechanical monkey on too light a string. I remember I yelled down that he was coming and jumped off the roof and ran up along the river among the trees. I don't know what happened to the others. I went a way upstream and crossed the tracks and came back down along the hill above them and saw Mike sitting in the door of the shack all alone. None of the others were there. I wanted to go down but he looked so lonely that I didn't dare.

I did come back from time to time to see if he was there. He always was. I don't know where he got his food. There was a small store in somebody's house right at the edge of town, small and selling bread and canned beans, and I got the idea he went there. How he got money was another thing I didn't understand but I do know that I never saw him downtown. Downtown there were flags and posters and things all over. The flags hung limp and droopy in the long hot sum-

mer. The posters and the charts of rank in the gents' furnishings store were getting crimped around the edges and fly-specked and faded where the western sun came hot on them under the awning. I thought of Mike every time I saw those faded glories mixed in with the shiny new ones like the poster of the smiling soldier with the pile of books in his arms. I wanted to talk to Mike about that, about the books and the trenches, if he had much time for reading and if he read things like we had to read in school.

But I didn't go to see him until the day of the false report of armistice. We came running from the school yelling and screaming all the way downtown. The mill whistle going off was like a starter's signal for me. I ran downtown and stopped for no flags, not even for the extra ones, the new ones the whistle had brought out, nor for the automobiles going up and down the main street with their horns blowing, nor for my friends dancing on the sidewalks. I ran yelling straight downtown across the river and up the tracks to where crippled Mike lived in the shack we kids had built of the new material that hadn't been paid for and that lumber Lambert had left there for some private reason or maybe because he couldn't drive a truck up the tracks.

It was that day, the day of the false report, I talked to Mike.

I had come running up the tracks with things to say and ask bubbling in me and I found him there sitting in the door-way of the shack, his crutches

crossed on the brown earth before him. "I was going to tell you," I said and stopped, forgetting everything.

"Tell me what?"

"Well," I said.

"What you scared about? It's over. For a while anyway."

"It isn't that," I said. "Anyway not only." I remember the mill whistle was tied down screaming all the time I was with him and we could hear the automobile horns far away and the yelling and I sat on the ground there and took up one of his crutches and scratched in the ground with the tip of it. "Look," I said. And I told him the many strange things I had felt about him. I said, "I've thought about you from the first day I hit this town." We kids talked a low English those war days. Our teachers didn't like it at all. "My mother slapped my face for talking about you and everybody hates you and I don't know why." Then I said, "I bet you think I'm dumb," embarrassed, sitting chilled on the cold earth. And I asked how he liked the job we had done on the shack.

He didn't answer. He asked was the square crowded there by the mill.

I said yes very crowded. "People hate people," I said. "They hadn't ought to. You don't hate them do you?"

"I'd like to be there," he said. "It would be a good target. I'd like to have one of those German machine-guns. I used one once. We turned it around on them. Their own gun. They're more satisfying to use. I mean

there's this long belt of cartridges and you feed it in with your own hands. It's more satisfying than just holding a trigger back. It would be a good target there now," he said.

"It wouldn't do any good," I said. "They'd send you away again."

"There's been enough anyway of targets," he said. "But maybe when you say enough you try to forget and you do forget and that's not right."

I was young and I told him more of how I had felt and he listened and then I said I had had a hard time all my life to remember or forget. I said because it was hard people got lazy and didn't try either and that made them bad people. I think I said, "Of course I'm awfully young to talk this way but I like to know things," and I think he smiled down at me when I said it. "People ought to love people," I said. "Even my own mother hates me when I talk about you. And I hate her when she can't think to do anything but slap me. People ought to know more what to do than slap. Maybe it's too easy to hate. It's the easiest thing there is."

He smiled down at me.

"You ain't talking," I said. "You're as bad as my mother not talking."

And he said, "It's a great satisfaction with your hands feeding it that way. It would be now from the roof of the mill. A thousand sheep-faced idiots who think because they're a thousand they're better than anyone. When all they have that's more is a few zeros

to make the number longer. It would be a satisfaction.''

And there it is. Maybe it's a story. I imagine there are many soldiers that have talked this way but Mike was the only one I ever heard and so sharp is my memory of it that I might as well have said it myself. I was young. It's hard to unravel times and people when you think about them a lot and at different times. So call it a story. It ought to have a name. Call it Me and Old Mike so it will have a name. Only that sounds like a name for a tramp story. Call it Adrift on the Big River. Only that sounds like the name for one of those Rover Boy books. Or for a funny story of some kind. So let it stand that way. Maybe it is funny. It could be for all I know. I don't know the facts. I only talked to Mike that once. He talked a long time, talked until I began to feel my old fright again and I stood up and ran away. I stopped in the woods across from the house and began to cry, maybe because I had run away while he had been talking. I leaned against a rough-barked tree-trunk crying. I didn't want to go home.

I suppose the whole point is that he should have had better sense than to talk the way he did, to speak so to a small boy, particularly when he knew people were saying a truck had got his leg and he had never been near the trenches. The people of our town never did give him credit for much sense anyway.

LANDSCAPE PIECE

The car sped south along a coastal road:
Lleyn, to a long blue bay the calm desire.
Our learnéd sons have crossed the fearful border,
And now old men at home govern without fire.
Cardigan. O who can revel in that joyous peak
-- Deep-sown the speech and hillbound the people?
Chapel on hill; prime ships of tombstone; all,
all doomed
Like brilliant boys in metropolitan exile.
Northward snow waves were a shock to system
After smoking chimneys and welfare parks,
Derided by falling streets down to a shore
Where even furnace shapes blaze through trains
at clerks.
Horsemen gone; earth bare: no sun shines
bright today
On man of straw, foolish student, or his apostasy.
T. b. reports; a cometobed; or G. P. bomb.
No wonder our birthday stars have stolen away!

Keidrych Rhys

THE GESTATION

I have gone down to the beach
where green in this light of this moon
and huge in the shadow of this land
the host lies.
Already my mother eats
and there are others
crouched where millions swarm in the sand
mouths covered with dust
moving up and over the body
eating in this green light,
and I will not eat.

But rather I walk at the shore
where the water grins, sinking inward,
leaving at the rim
this ring of salt.

Nor is there beast-call nor bird-call
nor call of trumpet.

The concave sky curving from the edge of the
world
catches only the rustle of beetles,
and they dry.
And the moon swerves
sickening through the wide immaculate heaven,
Broods disaster, blurred with gin.

Nor bear they yolk of egg,
only dry shell.

And their voices, those men
feasting at the fungus flesh,
their song is the croak
their voice, the dry rasp.
Away from the towering fungus corpse,
from the dunes to the broad shore
and he comes with me.

The insect race is behind,
creeps blindly on the carcase of the host
and creaks minutely.
Churp! crack! the sound of crickets
lusting in the wilderness.

And he grasps my hand
and I grasp his hand
sensing the strength that was lost
and the seed of new strength from despair.

We stand at the sea edge, waiting,
and the sea comes roaring at our feet
out of that womb the waters roaring
hissing up in many voices
with tendril arms extending
coiling back from the rim of salt,
back from our ankles hollow with hunger.

I have desire to dance
and in a clear clear sky
I see a white bird flying south
I see a shining rock high rising
a tragic pylon from the sea.

Robert E. Symmes

THE PROTESTANTS

CANTO ONE

The guilty look shifts from each window
and in the street the children stop their games.
Among the piles of broken brick
the cops and robbers stop. In her retreat
the slattern female winces up her face
and screws a smile for silence,
accepts with shifty eyes your challenge
while from abandoned street
across the rows of rusted rail
and from the dark of doorways
comes this barking. Even the small ones
leaving their chalkmark on the pavement
follow with a crafty baby face for money.

Hunger breeds such age in one,
hunger wrinkles back the skin,
reveals the animal eye
and the claw.

I see the bone beneath her flesh
and where she moves
the pelvic rot.

Houses of greed crowding the street,
brownstone fronts with empty eyes.
For Rent. For Sale. Condemned.
Each hungry room reaching back
with hollows of darkness and broken glass.
Haven for cats. Mocker of poor.
Stone. Timber. Lumber under the dust,
bearng the shock of the passing truck.

The house shakes with the contact.
Brick breaks the window. Laughter.
Everything tight to a breaking.

Grass cracks through such cement.
The rain in the spring and the sun
and a little grass pushing up
here in this corner breaks the cement.

Fire coming upon such a world,
from such things will make a test.
The sky over the L blazes with heat
where stripes of sulphur streak the walls.
Ice melts, and the psychopath beholds
the burning gas in a midnight world.
The Times. The News. A million books.
Coupons. tickets. food for the fireburn.
Phoenix rising from the ash heap ---
birdfire from bundles --- old clothes,
furniture broken and broken teeth
and with her hair streaming fire
a woman approaches, entirely nude,
her body stone white from the age of stone,
and a wolf at her side.
"Poisoner of the young!" --- I cry.
"Demon, and you so near the bottom?"
And she --- "Your world already shudders."
And we walked out under the X-rays
so that the metal plates above my knee
showed dark against my gelatine flesh,
and she was stone all milky stone,
the wolf a bony spectre at her side.

Crumbling south and north, the subway,
shower of brick and dust of mortar.
The skeleton city revealed.
The light humming.
The air making sound over the city.
Greyribbed. Inconstant.
Airdeath into fire at midnight,
and she being not of this world,
having crossed from beyond,
walks beside me. Speaks.
"We walk here among lost people."
and an old man rises in protest
making the sign of the comrade.
"See" --- he cries --- "you who would avoid
hell-mouth,
Here is a hell we have created."

Granite. Steel. Webs of stone.
This concrete world against the sky
so that if there are stars,
there are stars only through a shield of glass,
only the glimmer, cold and unreal,
the cinema hallucination
lost in the eternal brighter eyes
of our electric night.
When I look out over the river
there looms this arm of iron across the sky,
the sooty stacks of railroad yards
and if there are stars --- I look ---
they are lost in the lights of the town.

And from the caverns of this world,
houses of greed crowding the street
so that no man finds his rest.
This room empty, hungry with dust,
movement only as the spider moves.
And this room where seven live,
a frying pan with fish upon the bureau,
and on the bed --- last Sunday's Times,
a dirty shift and cans of beer.
Fragments of my world on fire.
From here. By telephone. By wire
and shreiking from cheap radios,
from subway corridors and halls,
outcries. The saxophone and calls of pain
vibrate upon the starless air.
I hear the sound of horns and of hands.

But we would pass this place
so many people crowd the shore.
Already beams have caught the fire.
The surfaces of buildings crack with heat.
A child's face thru the smoke
comes ever to my eyes.
Voices deep and hoarse,
and sounds of hands amongst them
as I fall. The howling of a wolf.
Such sounds as poverty will make,
such voices as the poor contain,
eyes thru smoke and idle hands
in protest. Banners. Fists.
I pass on thru the gates of Hell.

Robert E. Symmes

MUSICAL RECORDINGS RECEIVED

Reviewed by

JOHN LYNES

Beethoven Violin Sonatas

Sonata No. 2 in A Major, opus 12.
Sonata No. 6 in A Major, opus 30, No. 1
Sonata No. 5 in F Major, opus 24 "Spring"
Sonata No. 9 in A Major, opus 47 "Kreutzer"

(Played by Simon Goldberg, violin, and Lili Krauss, piano. Sonatas Nos. 5 & 9 are on seven 12-inch records in Decca album No. 2. Price: $7.75. Sonatas Nos. 2 & 6 are on five 12-inch records in Decca Album No. 3 Price: $5.75)

This group of recordings is, to our mind, Decca's best offering to date. These two fairly obscure artists appear to have all the necessary equipment for fine sonata playing. Both have complete mastery of their instruments, both sense the importance of the duality of sonata playing and both delight in placing the music foremost and themselves secondary. Each phrase has been carefully considered and the most sensible and artistic interpretation agreed upon. The personalities of the artists are seldom evident and then only enough to give sparkle to the result.

It's Beethoven without trimmings, in perfect taste and well worth andbody's money.

Guitar Recital (Played by Vicente Gomez. Three 10-inch records. Decca Album No. 17. Price: $2.75)

If you want to think of Spain in terms of fiestas, castenets and Carmen instead of class wars and dictators listen to Vicente Gomez. These six recordings, including some of his own compositions, vary from plaintive love songs and serenade to riotous rhythmic Spanish dances. He hasn't the suave concert hall finish of Andreas Segovia but in creating exciting musical pictures of Spain he has no equal. He's the sort of guitar player you'd hope to find playing in the streets of Seville on some holiday evening.

Debussy Recital (Fray and Braggioti, Piano duets: Four 10 inch records. Decca Album No. 52. Price: $3.50)

Jacques Fray and Mario Braggioti have been amusing the fringe of the music loving public for years However, their *free* interpretations of these Debussy pieces depart too far from the printed notes for our liking. Debussy was free enough in his use of form and harmonic structure and, we feel, needs no further "improvements".

Additions of new harmony, trick endings, etc. to help sell him to America's novelty seeking radio listeners result in a superficially pleasing hodge-podge. In this era of Digests, Stories of Philosophy, Outlines of History, ad infinitum, this album of super-charged Debussy may be right up most people's blind alley.

The pieces recorded are: The Golliwog's Cake Walk, Rêverie, La Cathédrale Englontie, L'Isle Joyeuse and Fêtes.

Bruckner Overture in G Minor (The Queen's Hall Orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood. Two 12-inch records. Decca Album No. 7. Price: $2.50)

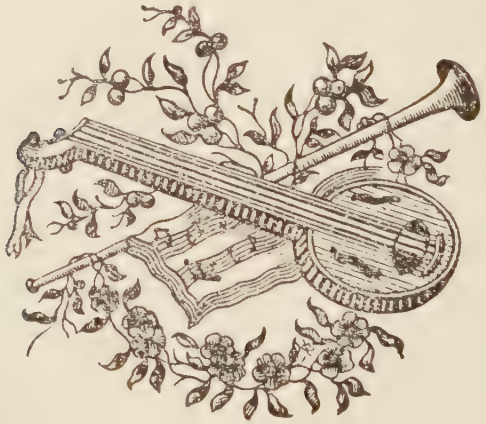
A compact, well written overture in typical Bruckner style. Pleasing but not too exciting. Well played by the Queens Hall Orchestra. A very brassy rendition of Glinka's Russian and Ludmilla Overture fills out the set.

Walton - Concerto for Viola and Orchestra (Frederick Riddle with The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer. Three 12-inch records. Decca Album No. 8. Price: $3.50)

Mr. Walton's new concerto is a welcome and, we hope, a lasting contribution to the literature of the shamefully neglected viola. The concerto is built along the lines of the Brahms concerto in that the orchestra is not merely an accompanying unit. Wisely recognizing the limitations of the viola, he uses it to good effect in the more luscious passages and leaves the brunt of the work to the orchestra.

The harmonic technique is definitely radical but is relieved by excellent melody, clear cut development and form. Particularly interesting is the second movement, *Vivo, con moto preciso*, which impressed me as being a sort of distorted Bach fugue.

Frederick Riddle, as viola soloist, handles the solo parts very nicely as does the London Symphony Orchestra its very difficult score.



**The Sun of Justice*, by Harold Robbins
(Publisher: Heath Cranton Ltd., 6 Fleet Lane, London E. C.4
American Distributor: Thomas Barry, Scotch Plains, N. J.)

In resuming, now, with this review of Robbins book, we come to where he states, just following where we left off, that Industrialism has arrived at its present frightful stage, and can only proceed towards its inevitable deathly cul-de-sac of the future by a continuance of the ever-taughtening strain between itself and agriculture, and by desperately devouring the swiftly dwindling supplies of the earth's irreplaceable raw materials.

And condemning this suicidal greed by which the disease of Industrialism feeds itself --- "living on capital" --- Robbins calls it, he warns us that not only has frightful damage already been done, but even more terrifying events impend. In briefly calling attention to some of the destructions left in the wake of Industrialism's March of Progress, Robbins points out:

"It has been estimated that the destruction of the world's forests has proceeded with such ghastly and wanton speed that after only about fifty years of it, they are within twenty-five years of exhaustion. Forests are organic, but they were the product of ages. In no practical sense can they be said to be replaceable on the Industrial scale."

He speaks, too, of the swiftly diminishing and *irreplaceable* inorganic fuel supplies, without which the wheels and engines and machines of the present In-

* This review is continued from the preceeding issue, where it was left off because of lack of space.

dustrial society will become frozen into the eternal stillness of a far-scattered, gargantuan junk-heap - - strange, enigmatic shapes, which, like the dinosaurs and other monstrous creatures of this planet's past, will undoubtedly be woven into the myths and legends of future generations, before they finally disintegrate and vanish like nightmare-relics of the long, drawn-out Industrial night through which humanity is now blindly struggling. And to those vassals of Industrialism, who scoff at the suggestion that the marvellous March of Progess of modern Industrialism is headed up a blind alley, Robbins adds:

"No one knows what untried resources there may be but with half the millionaires in the world hunting for them they cannot be very numerous!"

He speaks briefly, too, of those so called scientists --- hired servants of the masters of the Industrialized world --- who invaded the realm of Agriculture and tried to put the fields and crops under a Ford-Stakhanov single-crop speed-up system, only to have their money-grubbing efforts violently sabotaged and annihilated by floods, drought, dust-storms, and erosion.

And then, moving onto a different plane of attack, Robbins reveals further fatal flaws in the Stalin-Hitler-Mussolini-Roosevelt-Grover Whalen --- etc. etc. chorus of Industrialism's World of Tomorrow's Age of Plenty. For he lays bare the saprophytic nature of Industrialism, the spreading parasitical dry-rot underneath its false-front of efficiency and productiveness, by pointing out the steadily rising fungus growth of *unproductive* occupations --- the vast, ant-like army of salesmen, clerks, typists, book-keepers, etc. etc., (along with those other huge parasitical bodies, which Robbins somehow slips up on mentioning, the paid assassins

and body-guards of the internecine States of this Industrialist society --- the soldiery and police), all of whom already greatly outnumber the workers engaged in the basic productive occupations such as agriculture, fishing, mining, building, etc.

"I need not" writes Robbins, "discuss the obvious fact that the great bulk of these unproductive operations partake of the nature of industrialism proper, *especially in their high sub-division and remoteness from reality* . . . The largest towns in the world are not productive, but parasitic. London and New York consist chiefly of salesmen and clerks. We do not realize, although the evidence confronts us every day, what a high proportion of industrial production is for *mere transport and maintenance of the system itself*. I commend a scrutiny of these proportions to my readers. I commend to them also *the fact that in machine production material tends more and more to be impermanent and rubbishy. Necessarily so, because really permanent materials deserve and frequently obtain the dignity of working by hand.* But there is a defect more fundamental still. Industrialism has destroyed the organic society. It is now destroying the very physical and mental basis of permanence. The family life went long since. The very ability to make a family, as well as the will, is now going. For it seems clear that infertility is now becoming *involuntary* as well as voluntary. This is a feature of Industrialism which demands separate and lengthy treatment. The fact is undoubted. Survival rates all over the industrial world are below unity. That is, populations are not only not increasing, they are failing to reproduce themselves."

Robbins then corroborates his findings by quoting extensively from Dr. Alexis Carrel's book *Man the Unknown* And although we ourselves plan to have a thorough examination of Carrel's book in one of our future issues, it is difficult to refrain from quoting here some of the statements which Robbins has selected, and

which we feel deeply in accord with. Statements such as:

"Men cannot follow modern civilization along its present course, because they are degenerating. They have not understood that their body and consciousness are subjected to natural laws, more obscure than, but as inexorable as the laws of the sidereal world. Neither have they understood that they cannot transgress these laws without being punished ... Most civilized men manifest only an elementary form of consciousness. They are capable of the easy work which in modern society insures the survival of the individual. They produce, they consume, they satisfy their physiological appetites. They also take pleasure in watching, among great crowds, athletic spectacles, in seeing childish and vulgar moving pictures, in being rapidly transported without effort, or in looking at swiftly moving objects. They are soft, sentimental, lascivious, and violent. They have no moral, esthetic, or religious sense ... It seems that modern business organization and mass-production are incompatible with the full development of the human self. If such is the case, then industrial civilization, and not civilized man, must go ... Men should live in small communities instead of immense droves ..."

Robbins' next chapter is titled *Work and the Machine*, and an intimation of the revivifying truths it contains can be best given by the following excerpts:

"Art is not some remote and ineffectual talent which needs a studio and a Bohemian life for its practice. Mr. Eric Gill, with his double authority as a philosopher and a master-craftsman, has exposed that nonsense for many years. '*An artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist.*' Art, in other words, is *human work*, if by human we mean the full concurrence of the faculties of man in the task. He must have strength and skill. He must also have an intellectual concept of the thing to be made. And unless he is allowed to have this intellectual concept and to carry

it out freely, his work is not art, and is not human. That is, responsibility is essential to human work ... My present purpose is confined to the establishment of the Catholic principle that real human work, however simple, is *art*. But it must be, however simple, fully responsible and complete in itself ... As Capitalism is a disease of property, so Industrialism is a disease of work ... Machinery makes personal skill obsolescent. How many arts are lost entirely, and others dying, by its introduction? But all human skill is of help to sanctification, and the reduction of the relative operations to a brute machine is therefore damaging to human personality. Machinery, it is said, enables us to avoid drudgery. It is false. Every art has an element of hard work, which is part of the discipline of the job. If work is complete, the craftsman has the discipline of the 'drudgery', and joy of the craft, in the one task. It is a mark of Industrialism to have segregated drudgery, as when a few poor wretches have to look after the sewage of a whole community. In normal forms of life, every man does this for himself, as part of his self-discipline ... There are machines which require skill to use, as motor cars. In these cases wider principles must be invoked. On the one hand that society must be diseased if, in great proportion, the citizens at any given moment are where they do not wish to be. For to remedy this is the only use of cars. On the other hand, use of a machine must include an investigation into the necessary methods of its manufacture, and if these are inadmissable by the main principles of ethics, the machine should not be used even if it is, in its finished form, innocuous. *I have never seen any force in the argument that to scrap the machine would drive us into poverty and drudgery. It all depends on the organization of the new society.* So far as my historical reading goes, drudgery only existed when the conditions of oppression were present, and there are numerous examples of happy societies in the past. That, however, is not the point. I am convinced that all *industrial* machinery should go, on the strictest Catholic principles, *and*

irrespective of whether we become poor or not, but of course in due deliberation and order. As regards other kinds of machinery, I am content to abide by the principles laid down by the late Arthur Penty: (1) The use of machinery should be restricted where it conflicts with the claims of personality --- that is, it should not be allowed to turn men into robots. (2) It should not be allowed where it is injurious to health. (3) It should not be allowed to create economic disorder like unemployment. (4) It should not be allowed where it conflicts with the claims of the crafts and arts. (5) It should not be allowed to multiply commodities beyond the point at which natural demand is satisfied --- that is, beyond the point at which sales need to be artificially stimulated by advertisement. (6) It should not be allowed to trespass seriously upon the world's supply of irreplacable raw material ... My readers may care to reflect on how much mechanization would be left if every one of these irrefutable conditions were applied."

The following chapter, titled *Finance and Commerce*, commences with this quotation from St. John Chrysostom: *No Christian should be a merchant, because a merchant can rarely or never please God.* Well, God must certainly be displeased, to put it mildly, with Christians of these days. And so, too, is Robbins, who tells us, among other things, that the Roman Catholic Church has always condemned Usury (interest on a loan), and still condemns it. But apparently, from one's observations and contacts with Roman Catholics and all other Christians of these days, the condemnation is quite ineffectual. When the Roman Catholic Church condemns heretics, as it did during the Inquisition, or when it condemns the enemies of that modern defender of the Faith, recently blessed for his victory by the present Pope, --- Butcher Franco --- it seems to be able to be quite effectual. However there is no particle of doubt in the reader's mind of the way in which Robbins must look

upon such a foul creature as Franco, no matter how many blessings the Pope confers and sweetly poses for, to be photographed and publicized via such holy merchants and usurers as the owners of the press and moving-picture industries. Nevertheless, despite the undoubted integrity of Robbins, I found this particular chapter quite dull and tedious. But the ensuing one, *Self-Sufficiency and the Land*, and the final one, *Conclusions*, contain much that we are in profound sympathy with. Robbins quotes a recent joint statement by the Mid-Western Bishops of the United States:

"The first duty of the farmer is not to produce, but to live ; and to live in a manner befitting his worth as a man and his dignity as a child of God. There should be in the occupation of the farmer a dignity and independence that are not possible in the collective mass-production enterprises of modern industry ... We are opposed to the industrialisation of American agriculture and to the system of corporate farming. The farm is primarily a place to live and to make a living."

And to this, Robbins adds:

"It seems clear therefore that a return to the Land is at once the most direct and the most strategic Catholic action ... The technique of such a return to simplicity and sanity on the land has not been worked out completely, because it has not yet been but properly into practice. Many mistakes have been made and will be made. But enough is known and proved to ensure its ultimate success."

Robbins then outlines what he considers should be essential factors of a return to the Land. First, he says, it must be, after a brief period of experiment, on a scale as widespread as possible. Secondly, if the State will not finance such a movement, "it must be financed by the willing sacrifice of Catholic wealth." (But in this, I feel, Robbins is deluding himself. For the State

will most certainly not finance it, and as for rich Catholics, they seem willing enough to sacrifice portions of their wealth to support such of their fellow-churchmen as Mussolini and Franco, who are bringing about a swift return to the Land (inside coffins) for the disinherited, betrayed working class, but there is no valid hope in believing that rich Catholics will ever *willingly* part with any of their wealth to aid such fellow-churchmen as Robbins. Because his *living* return to the Land would purge society of the false, evil, dollars and cents wealth, and rich Catholics, like all other rich Christians and non-Christians, are shrewd enough to realize this. Debased by their wealth, they are like cornered rats scuttling about the tomb of today, desperately clinging to their necrophagous industrial spoils, and they much prefer to *prolong* their day of reckoning by financing such stop-gaps as Mussolini and Franco. But even though thousands of innocent children have gone *first*, as they did in Spain and China, the Pied Piper of all such rat-like wealth is rapidly approaching to lead its possessors to their doom. The sharp-eared can already hear his pipe clearly wailing in the midst of the present insane cacophony of cities, factories, radios, machine-guns, bombs, etc. etc. And so I feel that Robbins had better not count on "the willing sacrifice of Catholic wealth" to facilitate a widespread return to the Land by impoverished Catholics.) To resume though with his outline. The third important factor, he says, is that the Catholic agrarian movement must consist of fully-rounded communities, containing besides the farmers themselves all essential services: craftsmen, priest, doctor or nurse, schools. Fourthly, these communities must be self-subsistent to the fullest possible extent, and should trade with the outside world only for ex-

ceptional goods. In relation to all this, Robbins says:

"I am not in favor of any form of mechanisation in agriculture, for the severely practical reason that machinery on the land serves only one purpose. It enables fewer men to cultivate a given acreage, or, what is the same thing, it enables an equal number of men to cultivate a larger acreage. It is thus, of its nature, hostile to small communities of men, for it provides an irresistable temptation to increase acreage and thus to destroy intimacy and balance. The older technique of farming provides adequately against all reasonable difficulties due to weather conditions. Finally, I will not accept the position that the task is impossible. To repeat a principle I have used many times, *it is incumbent upon anyone who believes in God to hold that if a thing ought to be done, it can be done.* And since, by the severest logic, our survival depends upon a return to the Land, this is supremely a thing that ought to be done. ... Within the limits possible to a work of this modest size ... we have seen that man is not a 'hand', to be given so much of bread and circuses as will keep him alive and quiet, but a Person, with attributes and rights drawn from his likeness to God. We have seen that the Family, the primal human society, is not something created or tolerated by the State, but on the contrary is its unit and its archetype. We have seen that organic bodies, and the State itself, are for man, and not man for them ... We have seen that by the severest deduction from necessary principles, a certain form of society is preferred and envisaged by the Church ... And since it is the purpose of thought to issue in necessary action, we have now to consider how this structure, from being a fortifying vision, may be made a concrete reality on the earth where God has placed us. In order to indicate the necessary lines of such action, we must distinguish between what action is imperative, and therefore the duty of all, and what action is to be ruled by prudence ... I think there are three features of the Modern World against which Catholic action must be universal and of obligation, *regardless of consequences even to public order*:

(1) We must oppose the tendency to re-establish slavery. Freedom is the necessary basis of Catholicism. (2) We can tolerate no social basis which is tending to human sterility and extinction. (3) Personality is the prime human attribute. Therefore we can participate in no system which damages or destroys it . . . I do not think that the task, during the next generation, will be as difficult as it has seemed hitherto. It is quite clear that apart from a few worshippers of the machine like Mr. Wells, an increasing multitude of intelligent men and women all over the world, and of all shades of religious and political opinion, are convinced that civilization is headed for disaster. Only the brutal inertia of finance and industrialism prevents early action. And in the long run, ideas must prevail over a system whose only dynamic is greed of gain ... Action against a hostile position must be done by frontal attack, or by an outflanking movement. Where it is possible, the latter is always preferable, for where an enemy is entrenched, there he is strongest, and the greater sacrifice is necessary to dislodge him. Therefore, Catholic reaction must, in my judgement, have an *outflanking* character. It does not appear that Finance-Industrialism will ever yield to frontal attacks. On its own chosen ground it is impregnable. For this reason, it seems that attacks based on currency reform alone, or on a continuance of industrialism without the Industrialist, must always fail ... But if, unhappily, the greater fight be upon us: if we must look forward to a triumphant development of everything we hate, then we must still engage. This is not a battle to be declined, because to decline battle is to be absorbed in the invader, who is Death. As has been stated by a great writer quoted frequently in these pages: 'Is Communism compatible with Catholicism? The question is an improper one. The question is: Is Catholicism compatible with the industrial development of Society? The answer is certainly: No. For at the root of Catholicism is the doctrine of human responsibility, and that State in which human responsibility is denied or diminished is a State in which Catholicism cannot flourish: Man is man all the time, and not only in his

spare time. In an industrial State, men, working men, the majority, are only fully responsible when they are not working. In such a State, Catholicism returns to the catacombs. Thence she will emerge when the orgasm of industrial triumph has spent itself.' ''

And it is at this point --- with Robbins counselling the brave and steadfast among his readers to choose physical death in their struggle against *all* the *superficially* conflicting forces of the present Industrialized world rather than accept the terrible and irreparable defeat of a morally and spiritually barren existence --- that the book ends. And despite whatever criticism we have directed against that Church to which Robbins is so staunchly loyal, and against those fellow-churchmen of his of whom he himself must feel profoundly distressed and ashamed, we salute him, and from the depths of our hearts we wish him Godspeed in his struggle to lead those other fellow-churchmen of his --- the multitude of betrayed, disinherited Catholic workers --- out of the terrible labyrinth of the modern industrial world and back to their rightful heritage of a full, joyous life through a return to the Land.

J. P. C.

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We have been asked, as an exchange courtesy, to announce that the enlarged, combined *Spring-Summer* issue of the *ROCKY MOUNTAIN REVIEW* contains among other things:

Stories by Vardis Fisher (1939 Harper Novel Prize Winner), Erling Larsen, Alfred Morang, Cleone Montgomery, and Gilbert Neiman; Poetry by Brewster Ghiselin, William Pillin, and Else Engell.

The *ROCKY MOUNTAIN REVIEW* will be sent for two years for one dollar. Single issues cost fifteen cents.

Ray B. West, Jr. is the Editor, and he has as his Associates: George Snell, Grant H. Redford, and Brewster Ghiselin.

All communications should be addressed to: Box 5, Branch Agricultural College, Cedar City, Utah.

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Savage's essay in this last *Phœnix* was really very fine --- "it is impossible for us to deny our present. Rather, we must incorporate it into our experience and live through and beyond it" --- and of course you realize that there is a very immediate meaning to that. I, who live in the cities, these cities of the east that I see already towering to the final catastrophic year, from their fire will spring the Phœnix --- revolution is a mild, a colorless word for the fire that must come then. Life itself, the life that is repressed in the millions of clerks and stenographers in these cities will burst into flame --- already in individuals it bursts into flame and there is insanity and revelation, and among the strong the marching of new prophets.

But we who look forward to the future must refuse to be destroyed by the cities --- that too you realize --- communities must be formed among those who refuse to sacrifice life to business, romance, industry, the store counter, the cinema palace, the dime novel ... Our species man is a group animal yes --- but to force him into a herd of seven million!

Few people today care to realize that the human race has built up a huge superstructure of life that is not gradually but rapidly destroying life. Few care to face the fact that the economic system has destroyed all creativeness in work, that the social unit of the industrial city has consumed the fire of man to convert energy into hysteria, that the monstrous organization of religion has destroyed man's mystic points of contact ... points of contact that only the few remnants of the primitive man and the few sensitives retain.

What can we expect this human race to be after nineteen hundred years of increasing denial of life? History books herald the spread of trade and the rise of nations as progress. They mention not at all the direction of that progress. They do not analyze the

modern society where millions of human beings struggle to express their spark of life, to create, to live according to their nature and where millions of human beings give up that struggle, murdered by the immense betrayal of their abortive "system."

Man is now rushing into another war. We can't laugh that off. The inevitable result of his present economic order or rather one of the inevitable features of his present economic order is war, and war on a gigantic scale, as the great imperialist superstructures called states, as these huge economic units come into death grips.

Two things face the honest man who is not completely crushed. One is to destroy this economic and social order that only breeds more inversion of society, and the second is to establish a new order to restore the creative action of every human being. Yet this new order must in a sense be an absence of order, it must be a dialectical order proceeding from the necessities of the nature of man. I am really confused in this passage. But the main fallacy of modern society is that the natural man is forced into a preconceived pattern--what order there should be in society should proceed out of the necessity of the natural man.

Man is naturally a community creature but to say that it is natural for him to form communities of seven million is absurd.

But one thing faces the honest man, the man who still retains a sense of his unity with life, the living world ... that is that he cannot join with the death forces of war, that he recognizes that war is his enemy, it is war that he must defend himself against in the modern order. We all recognize the necessity of a man in primitive society whose house is being attacked to defend it. *Today it is war, it is the economic structure of "his" own country which attacks a man's house and his creative life, it is his own country which demands a man's life, not the enemy.*

The economic and social order must be destroyed, sabotaged, blasted by the fire from within and at the

same time that fire for new life must be nurtured and rescued from the threatened destruction by that war. For this your colony is important.

R.S.
New York City

I look forward to seeing the next *Phoenix*. Three months seems an awfully long time to wait for the new number --- but I expect it keeps you pretty busy!

I think you are lucky to be hidden away in the mountains --- well away from Europe. Here, in London, one hears and reads practically nothing except Hitler and war. It is so sickening! It staggers me that the nations can even contemplate war --- and here the young men are joining the Army quite cheerfully. I stink with my family because I advocate Pacifism. All this talk of war and crises is so depressing and saddening. The thought of war and the sheer waste attached to it makes me feel very sad. One also feels lonely. I have friends who are enthusiastic members of The Peace Pledge Union --- but I don't agree with that organization. I don't think you can *organize* Pacifism. I think it has to be a completely spontaneous thing. It is no use joining an organization in peace time --- and then finding that one is not strong enough to hold out in time of war. I think that Pacifists must of necessity be lone workers. I may be prejudiced --- I hate organization, as I believe when a certain idea becomes organized then I feel that it has lost a great deal of its sincerity. Pacifism, I feel, will not work in an organized manner. It has to be free --- the signing of peace pledges etc., is to me a waste of time.

You see, I don't believe in being militant. And, with organization comes the militant element --- then the pacifists themselves are active resisters. This, to me, is not compatible with pacifism. I do not believe in trying to force people to be pacifists. They must find it for themselves, to be the real thing. It is, I think, only necessary to say "No --- I shall not fight." Quite quietly --- and without fervour.

Not only am I a pacifist from religious grounds, but also from the point that I do not place the whole blame on one party. I have contempt for England, U.S.A., and Germany as I think they all want war. I think one is as bad as the other --- and I have no intention of taking sides. I have no doubt that England wants war, as does U.S.A., and Germany and Italy and France. It is simply Fascism against Communism. And as I have no time for either of these social systems, I don't see why I should fight. In fact, I detest Russian Bolshevism as much as I detest Fascism . . .

Stewart Chedburn
London, Eugland

(For those of our readers who are interested in a further aquaintance with Stewart Chedburn's convictions, we recommend his recent book Mors et Vita, published by the firm of Rene Hague & Eric Gill : 10 Bedford Street, London, W C 2)

Many thanks for the copies of the *Phœnix*. I don't believe I have anything you might be able to use. Though I should certainly like to write for the *Phœnix*, I fear I have nothing up to your standard. Further, I'm not certain I agree entirely with you.

You see, I feel that people who realize the source of the world's unrest must remain in the world and not seek a retreat. The very act of retreating --- or possibly a better word would be hibernating --- during the impending spiritually glacier age, does something to the individual that lessens his own vitality.

I am drawn whole-heartedly toward your ideas, except that I believe we must face it out --- win on the enemy's own ground. If we are stronger, we shall win.

I imagine all of us come to the recognition of one cold, hard fact --- the utter, awe-inspiring, inevitability of everything. Then, and then only, have we distilled things down until there is left only the clear, crystal precipitate of irony.

In other words, destroy everything --- cut down this whole top-heavy monstrous growth until nothing exists but what is healthy. From there we can build upward and onward once we are free of the cancerous limbs.

If we could only learn to see men as men. As ends in themselves and not as means to some other end. After all, man was made to be free. There is something in him that is bigger than any system or philosophy, but so few of them know it.

They are slaves to everything: to their habits --- tobacco --- liquor --- luxuries --- money --- conventions --- other people's opinions --- movies --- electric light --- conveniences. And why? Because our environment dwarfs men and makes a lot of undisciplined weaklings out of them. Weaklings who think more of their own selfish ends and smugly accept things-that-are as things-that-must-be. Because of our hypocrisy, greed and materialism --- the pragmatic keynote of our so-called civilization!

They are dwarfs because they strain for economic security as though it were the end-all and be-all of existence, giving up the greater part of their lives to extend a miserable existence. They spend the whole of their small stock of life in earning enough money to extend that life a little longer. And then they spend it in movies --- reading pulp magazines --- getting drunk --- playing with women --- selfish gratification --- anything to get away from the very same existence they are trying to prolong.

They must be made to see that only as individuals can they reach any salvation. And, lest we should lose our own living in the struggle, we can't run away. If we do, we are selfish in our own way. And in that way lies the common destruction.

Frank Nash
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Thank you very much for sending me the latest issue of *The Phœnix*. It had to be forwarded from Antioch College. I enjoyed it immensely; especially your editorial and Derek Savage's article.

"Enjoyed" is not the word I wanted --- I was "overjoyed" to see these sentiments expressed so boldly and clearly, still I'm afraid I can't altogether agree with them. As you can readily tell, no doubt, I am still very young and have lots of living and reading to do before I "know what its all about." I have shifted in

my enthusiasms from Buddhist mysticism to Trotzkyist communism so far, and now, for safety's sake I am following a policy of fence-straddling scepticism. So I ask: Is your analysis of present day society accurate? Is your program practicable? Frankly (I know you'll want me to say what I think) much of it seems like loose thinking and sentimentalism. For instance, the implication of your statement (in the review of the Stephen Foster Melodies album), "... the advance of Industrialism vomiting forth tractors, machines, chemical fertilizers, Hollywood-Chamber of Commerce-Radio City Culture, etc. etc. --- leaving in its wake droughts, floods, erosion, abandoned farms, tenement slums, moral collapse ... " seems unfounded. This New England farm where I am working now, for example, can be immeasurably improved by the correct application of chemical fertilizers. (I don't know much about biodynamic farming however --- perhaps even better results could be brought about in a more "indigenous" way.) Still, I'm afraid that your solution seems pretty much like getting rid of smallpox by doing away with human-kind.

I shall be coming up in the Catskills soon, and I hope I can see you and talk with you, because I really am interested ... being here on this farm this summer; doing hard work and eating good food; *feeling* rather than *thinking*, seems like heaven after last year in college and working in New York. I'm all for decentralization, a return to individual creativeness, etc.

I should like to write more and put a little more thought in it, but it's getting late, and if I am to get up with the animals tommorrow morning, I must go to bed.

David Miller
North Andover, Massachussetts

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Editor's Note: We would appreciate hearing from someone willing to assist us in the work of The Phoenix, in exchange for room & board. Print-shop experience helpful, but not essential.

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